

J.B.

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Mr. *Forbes's*
REMAINS;
WITH HIS
Funeral Sermon.

Mr. Forber's

THE MAINS



General Collection.

1701.
Pastoral Instruction:

BEING SOME
REMAINS

Of the REVEREND

James^K Forbes, M. A.

Late Minister of the GOSPEL,

I N

G L O C E S T E R.

CONTAINING

- I. A Farewel-Letter of Advice to his People.
- II. The Sum of the Last Sermon he Preach'd
before the Ministers of his County,
June 19th, 1711.
- III. His Short Counsel to YOUTH.

To which is Added,
His FUNERAL-SERMON, Preach'd at
Glocester, June 3d, 1712.

By J. N.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the *Bible and Crown*
in the Old-Change, 1713.

Price One Shilling.

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THE
P R E F A C E.

READER,

THESE Three little Fragments of an Excellent Man, whose Light shined long in his own Orb, and upon others round about him, come Abroad by Desire of those who had a Right to dispose of them for the Publick Good. The Pastor's last Letter to his particular Flock, contains his DYING THOUGHTS; tho' expecting some Tears ago, that his Race would be cut shorter, he then prepared it, and so made ready for the Coming of his Lord. It could not well answer its proper End without printing. His Order was, To communicate it soon after his Decease, and so it was as soon as it could be. Experience of Mankind suggested to him the Need of leaving such a Charge, which may be of like Benefit to others in like Circumstances. It is somewhat contracted for the Readers Ease, but not departing a tittle from the Author's Sense. Some Incidents delay'd its Publication; but it is not yet too late, if it meets with due Regard from those who professed not a little for the Worthy Author while living, and owe no less to his faithful Admonitions now.

The Sermon on Hab. 3. is but a Summary, yet agrees well with his own short Notes of it, which are since found.

The P R E F A C E.

manner was to write only his Heads and Scriptures, using a Liberty in preaching as the Lord gave him Utterance. The Errand of this, is to put us all in mind, to do what we can to revive the Work of God.

His Counsel to Youth is exactly in his own Words. Many Tears ago he had imparted it to divers on several Occasions, and there is still need, that it be entertained and practised. In all the Three Papers we should hear him as One from the Dead, for he says Nothing but what is warranted by Moses and the Prophets; the very Counsel of God. Take a little Pains, Reader, to turn to the quoted Texts, Hear, and thy Soul shall live: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

Prov. 9.
12.

The Sermon at his Funeral was necessarily hastened in most distracting Circumstances, in a mournful Journey, and delivered over the open Grave; and yet since the Preacher cannot help it, it must accompany its Betters; hoping for the Allowance which every one will perceive it needs. It had been just and fit that a far better Account were given of the Man of God deceased, but such as could do it were not then within Call, and the Preacher having no manner of Information, nor a Minutes time to seek it, could only testify what he knew, or could recollect. Many valuable Manuscripts of the Author are in divers hands, but with no Order to publish them; for which and other Reasons, there they rest, and may the better be spared, if these are well taken to Heart.

A
LETTER

O F

Instruction and Advice ;

F R O M

*An Aged Minister to his Surviving
Friends ; To be communicated to
them soon after his Decease.*

*Dearly Beloved in our Common Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ ;*

APPREHENDING that shortly I shall put off this Tabernacle, God, I hope, puts it in my Heart, to leave a few Things with you, which, by the Blessing of God, will be of Use to you, when ye can see and hear me no more. These are the last Words you can have from me, and I doubt not, you'll receive them as coming from one that had an entire Love for your Souls, living and dying : May the God of all Grace imprint them on all your Hearts. I write you my Heart as a dying Man, not in Elegancy of Speech, but in such plain Words, as infinite Wisdom and Goodness shall suggest : And in doing this, I look up to him, who is by Covenant the
Teacher

Teacher of all Saints, to guide my Mind and Pen, to what may be *now* proper, and profitable to you *hereafter*.

1. I will bring to your Minds something of that Providence which directed my Ministry to this Place, and some Consequences thereof.

2. I shall advise you, how to secure the Fruits of my Ministry when I am gone, and to preserve the Work of God, and Interest of Christ among you: In both I aim at your Edification. Oh thou King of Saints! make thy Way into the Hearts of this People, and seal their Instruction, and make them know by fresh Experience, What it is to *Sup with Christ, and Christ with them*.

Rev. 3.
20.

Jer. 14.
14.

1. As to my entring on the Ministry here, I was then very Young; but it hath since afforded me Satisfaction, That I did not *run before I was sent*, as some do. After I came from the University, the Lord made me very solicitous to know for what I was sent into the World: Being bred a Scholar, I had no Mind to Secular Employment: My Inclination was all for the Ministry; but one Thing much discourag'd me, I said, *Ab, Lord, I cannot speak, for I am a Child*. How can I deliver the Counsel of God with that Gravity and Authority as becomes a Minister of the Everlasting Gospel? I now sent many strong Cries to Heaven for Direction. I conferr'd with wise and holy Men, with whom I thought was the Mind of God, yet could not determine my own Spirit, till the Lord himself, as I apprehended, spake to me with a strong Hand, as he did to the Prophet, *Say not, I am a Child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee; and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak*.

v. 7.

Before

Before I came to *Glocester*, having preach'd several Lord's Days in a Parish, where the People earnestly press'd me to abide; I could not accept the Call to be a parochial Minister, for if I receiv'd the Parish-Maintenance from all, All would expect to have me baptize their Children, and administer the Lord's Supper to All according to long Custom. This was against my Conscience; and if I did not so, they would take a Prejudice against my Ministry, and render me incapable to do their Souls good. With Submission to God's Will, I desired above all Things to preach to a considerable Auditory, in Hope to win some to Christ; my very Soul crying to God, Where-ever thou shalt send me, oh that I may have some to present unto God in the Great Day, whom I as a poor Instrument have begotten to him by the Gospel.

While I solemnly debated these Things in my own Spirit, Providence gave me an unexpected Invitation to be a Lecturer in this City: This I more readily clos'd with, as more suiting my Principles; for I was to have no parochial Charge, and my Maintenance was to come from the State.

My first Sermon was from *Phil. 3. 8. I count all Things but loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ.* The Lord gave me Favour in the Eyes of an aged, wise, holy and experienced Minister, who, in tender Love, took much Pains to give me good Advice, how to carry my self towards the People. *I would have thee*, said he, *always choose the most profitable Subjects*: At first thou may'st shew some Learning, but study then all possible Plainness in preaching the Gospel. Plain preaching, is the only profitable preaching: Mind

not

not the Peoples Applause, they that cry thee up to Day, will shortly cry thee down: Study hard, as if no God helped thee, and thou were to do all by the Strength of thy own Parts; but when thou art to deliver what thou hast study'd for, depend wholly on Divine Assistance, as if thou hadst done Nothing; and as if thou wert to fetch every Sentence from Heaven. Oh, that I had more observed this Excellent Man's Instructions! He commended much to me the old Puritans Preaching, and holy, humble Conversations; as *Preston, Sibbs, Dod, Dyke, Rogers, &c.* and ever since I esteemed all such Men.

After one Years Preaching (Glory, glory to the Riches of Grace!), I had some visible Seals of my Ministry: some began to cry out, *We are damned, What shall we do to be saved?* As they in *Act. 2, 37.* I preached many Sermons on, *Oh, taste, and see that the Lord is Good.* Several came and acquainted me with the State of their Souls, readily declaring what the Lord had done for them, and desiring to have a Church erected for Christ here; for there was only the Parochial Worship, save that a few Arminians and Socinians kept themselves distinct. When the former called me to become their Pastor, the Weight of the Work made me decline it, and propound another with whom I might join: They refusing this, I was forced to consider further of it: These People often met to confer, and fervently to seek to God for Guidance in this Affair, consulting also the Pastors of other Churches: which issued in this Resolution, *To give up our selves to the Lord, and to one another by the Will of God.* To keep up the Truths and Ordinances of the Gospel in their Purity, according to the Measure of Grace receiv'd,
for

Psal. 34.
8.

2 Cor. 8.
5.

for the Glory of God, and propagating his Gospel, and for our mutual Edification. We did this on a solemn Day, assisted by eminent Ministers near us, and had a signal Presence of God with us.

One Thing I record for the Use of others after me : It was my constant Practice after I had finished a Subject, to pray earnestly, That God would direct my Thoughts to a Text most suitable to the Auditory, and by which he would speak to their Souls ; and help me in my private Meditations on it : and that when I came to give forth what God had given in to me, I might be enabled to *speak as of Sincerity, in the Sight of God* : And ² Cor. 2. 17. then that he would go forth with the Word, that it might accomplish the Work for which he sent it. Thus holy *Bradford* studied on his Knees.

Having now preach'd two Sermons on *Luke 7. 47. Her Sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much* ; I thought to insist no more on that Text : but for two or three Days, I could not fix my Thoughts on another : And one Night in my Sleep my Mind returned to the same Text ; much new Matter was suggested to me, in several important Points of Doctrine. I arose early and penn'd what I could remember ; concluding, That it was of God that I should preach again on that Text ; which I did above half a Year, and it was rare that a Lord's-Day passed without having an Account of some wrought upon. For ought I know, there was more Good done by those Sermons, than by All I preached before or since. At that Time Ten or Twelve were added to the Church in a Day, declaring their Experiences. The Wind of the Spirit bloweth when, and where

it listeth. Thus by the Pleasure of the Great Sovereign, *Peter* and his Company caught more Fish at one Draught than the Net could hold, when all the Night before they toiled for nothing. My worthy Friend *John 21.* *Mr. John Flavel*, told me, He had such a Presence of the Lord with him in preaching on *Revel. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the Door, and knock, &c.* as he never had before.

Conversion-work did then go on also in other Parts of this County, the Lord put it in the Hearts of Five or Six of his Servants, to go from Place to Place, spending a whole Day in Preaching and Prayer, and the Hand of the Lord was so with us, *that many be- Acts 11. 21. lieved, and turned to the Lord*; and joined themselves to particular Churches. *Then our Gospel came not in Word only, but in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance.* The People receiv'd the Word which they heard of us, *not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe:* They became Followers of us, and of the Lord: *Now Thanks be to God, 2 Cor. 2. 14. that so caused us to triumph in Christ.*

The joyful Days continued not long. When some of Satan's Subjects were snatched from him into Christ's Kingdom, he set his Agents to Work against what was truly Good: When a great Door and effectual was opened, there were many Adversaries. While good Preaching has no visible Effect, many will bear with it: But if People forsake the Way of the Multitude, and press in at the strait Gate, *John 16. 33. Acts 14. 22. then expect Trouble in the World.* Christ's Followers must take up the Cross. Such as *Matt. 16. 24. Acts 28. 22. bear no Good-will to true Godliness, will say the worst of it.* I met with Opposition from *2 Tim. 3. 12. all sorts, when it appeared that I differ'd from the*

the common Way of Worship. In the Year 1660, I was turned out of my publick Place, and deprived of Maintenance. I was complimented with great Offers, if I would conform; but if not, I was solemnly forbid to preach in this Diocess: In that Case, Christ having commanded me to preach, I was not to be silent for Man's Countermand. So I ^{Acts 4. 17,} went on preaching, and was twice imprisoned. ^{18, 19.} *Glocester* having been for the Parliament in the Civil War, and three Months besieged by King *Charles I.* with 2000 Men, at the Restauration a new Set of Men were put in Places, who thought they could never shew Zeal enough against others. My second Imprisonment continued Twelve Months; after which, I did, with Consent of the Congregation, remove to *London*; where many gracious Providences attended me, never to be forgotten. In a few Weeks, my Good Master found out Work for me, which I accepted, reserving a Liberty to return to my own, when Providence should give Opportunity. And now the Lord wrought for me two very memorable Salvations. In 1665, the House I lived in was visited with the Plague, but I was graciously preserved, according to *Psalms* 91. 5, 6, 7. That put me to preach upon *Psalms* 68. 20. *Our God is the God of Salvation; and unto him belong the Issues from Death*: While the Hand of the Lord did go forth against that Place, I was directed also to preach on *2 Chron.* 7. 13, 14, *If I send Pestilence among my People, &c.* and on *Amos* 4. 10, 11, 12. suitable to the Dispensation.

As that Year cut off Thousands of the Inhabitants of *London*, the next destroy'd their Habitations by a most dreadful Fire, from the Lord's-Day Morning, *September 2.* to the

B. 2

Thurs.

Thursday following: A very Prælude of that final Conflagration, 2 Pet. 3. 10. God set Bounds also to the devouring Flames, and the House where I lived was mercifully preserved, tho' the Fire was once near us: Thus fulfilling the Promise.

Isaiah 43.
2, 3.

In 1672. the King setting the Dissenters free, in Love to this People and the Work of the Gospel here, I left all my greater Accommodations in *London*, and continued here 'till our Liberty was again restrained; and then my Troubles increas'd. I was indicted upon the *Corporation Act*, the Penalty of which was Imprisonment. I was indicted on the 23d of *James I.* Penalty 20 l. a Month: And upon 35 *Elizab.* Penalty to abjure the Realm or die. At the same Time I was excommunicated, and the Writ *de Capiendo* was out against me: Yet did I not stir hence but with Consent of the Congregation: and then Providence led me to the most comfortable Place I was ever in. I had a convenient House, in a serene Air, and a friendly Christian Neighbourhood, and a more liberal Maintenance than elsewhere: Here I had Five Years quiet Exercise of my Ministry; wonderfully hid, when others, in most Places round about us, were in great Troubles.

In 1687. the Dissenters having Liberty once more, and this Church desiring my Return, I consulted not with Flesh and Blood, nor regarded worldly Interest, or the Importunity of other good Friends; but at a great Charge removed my Family hither again, where I knew there was a Spirit of Malignity against the Power of Godliness: My Call was here, and by God's Help I resolved to follow it; this being the Place where Providence first fixed my Ministry, and where God manifested himself

himself to me, and wrought by me more than any where else.

As my Relation to this People was not dissolved, our mutual Affection remained; and I concluded, That for *them* God had preserved me; and I applied to my own Instruction the Words of St. Paul.

1 Theff. 2.

Since my last Return to settle here, I met with several Things that have greatly exercised my Spirit. The Lord hath called home the most of those that were eminent for Knowledge, Faith, Holiness, and Usefulness: *Survivors have not laid to Heart*, nor filled up their vacant Places. Tho' God did memorably appear against the Enemies of true Seriousness, yet a new Generation have vented the like Enmity. Their Wings were indeed clipp'd; but it appeared what was in the Heart to do. We our selves had a Price in our Hands, but no Heart to improve it for the Honour of the Giver, and Benefit of our own Souls: *We sang God's Praises, but soon forgot what great Salvations he wrought for us.* There is among us a visible Decay of the Power of Godliness: A going into Factions or Parties, and not the former Success of Ordinances, &c.

7, 8.

2 Cor. 12.

14, 15.

Phil. 1. 3,

10 11.

If any thing in me is the Cause thereof, I have earnestly pray'd the Lord to shew it to me, and grant me godly Sorrow for whatever is amiss: *Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving Kindness, &c.* If for any thing in you the Lord is provoked to withhold the Blessing, the Lord discover it to you, humble you for it, pardon what is past, and put it in your Hearts to study how to promote the Interest of Christ and Religion among you. Oh that the Work of the Lord in this Place may not die with me! 'Tis my Soul's earnest Desire to the God of all Grace, that the Work

Psalms 51.

1, 2, 11, 12.

Work of the Gospel may go on after me more vigorously than ever it did in my Time; Psalm 90. praying with the Psalmist, *Return, O Lord, &c.* 14, 15, 16, *Let thy Work appear to thy Servants, and thy Glory* 17. *to their Children.*

2. Having thus reminded you of Things past, I am now to advise you how to preserve or secure the Fruits of my Ministry: And here I have many Things to say to you; but will confine my self to the most important. The Lord give a Blessing, that this my Bequeathment may be kept alive in the Minds of you and your Posterity when I am dead and gone.

I. The first Thing I leave with you is this, *Let the great Truths of the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ, be very precious to you.* It has been my constant Care to deliver nothing from the Pulpit, but what I was well assured was the very *Counsel of God* in the Scripture: So let it be your Study to be *sound in the Faith*, and continue in the Truths you have heard from me. In Matters of Faith I am one with the *Assembly's Confession and Catechisms*. I have subscribed the *Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England*: I never favoured *Arminianism*, *Popery*, *Socinianism*, nor any thing contrary to sound Doctrine. Herein follow me as I follow'd Christ speaking in the written Word, *Isai. 8. 20. To the Law and to the Testimony.* There is no *2 Tim. 3.* Occasion to be wise above what is written. *14, 15, 16.* Scripture is a complete Rule, and is *profitable for Doctrine*, or to teach all that is to be believed; and for *Reproof* of all contrary Errors: The primitive Christians *continued stedfast in* Acts 2. 42. *the Apostles Doctrine*, who had a perfect Knowledge of all Truth that was to be taught, and *Joh. 16. 13.* did infallibly teach it.

The

The Churches of Christ solemnly constituted by Authority of Heaven, are intrusted as Keepers of the *Oracles of God*, as the Jewish Church was of old : The *Depositum* is too great to be put in the Hands of this or that single Person : The Churches of Christ have all his Three Offices exercised among them, as no other Societies under Heaven have. Where the Churches of Christ are called *Golden Candlesticks*, for holding the Light or Knowledge of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ in the midst of them is girt about the Paps with a Golden Girdle, denoting his Priestly Office and Attire. His Head and Hair white as snow, his Eyes as a Flame of Fire ; denote his Prophetick Office ; and the Clearness and penetrating Efficacy of his Word. His Feet like fine burning Brass, and his Voice as of many Waters, &c. ; which sets forth his exercising kingly Authority in his Churches by due Discipline, dealing severely with such Members as walk contrary to the Gospel ; also treading under his Feet, and crushing all wicked Opposers and Persecutors. He will either make them bow to his royal Sceptre, or break them. He will be terrible to his Enemies, but keep his faithful Servants safe in his Right-Hand. All his Administrations in his Churches will be awful and glorious. Since then He there exerciseth his Office of a Prophet, see that ye continue in all his Doctrine. And the Churches must also as *Candlesticks* hold forth the Light of Christ to others about them. From you should the Word of the Lord sound out. The Lord make you continue a *Golden Candlestick*, that your Light may shine bright and pure to all about you.

Rom. 3.2.

9.4.

Rev. 1.12,

to 16.

2 Cor. 4.6.

1 Theff. 5.

5, 6, 7.

Exod. 28.

4, 40.

39. 27.

Heb. 4.12.

Acts 3.22.

Ezek. 34.

26.

1 Theff.

1. 8.

Rom. 1.8.

Mat. 5.16.

Beware

Beware of Doctrinal Errors as of other Sins : They are Soul-infecting Evils, and often prove most dangerous ; as that *Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadduces*. Leaven spreads it self through the Mass, fours it all, and makes it puff and swell. Beware of any Opinions that puff you up with high Conceit of your selves ; as if now you were got into a Form above others, and might look down on them as Underlings : The Heads of Rickety Children grow big, while the other Parts are weak and languishing : So some Professors have Notions of high Things, while there is little true Grace and Holiness in their Hearts. Suspect such Principles as puff you up, or four your Spirits, and cause you to confine your Love to a Party, having little Esteem of any that differ from you, tho' so Gracious and Holy, as that God admits them to Communion with himself. *Eph. 4. 11, to 16* : See and consider that Scripture, and *1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5. 2 Tim. 2. 16, 17, 18.*

1 Tim. 1. 19, 20. Error in Fundamentals must needs be a great Evil, because God commands that such be cut off by Excommunication.

Beware of Opinions that tend to magnify any Power in fallen Man ; for Nature improved is but Nature ; *That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* Regeneration is a supernatural Work of the Holy Ghost on sinful Man, whereby his whole Nature is changed and made New. Of our selves we are not sufficient to think a good Thought. The Spirit accompanies the Word, and teaching by it, doth enlighten the Understanding to discern Spiritual Things. Also there must be a Day of Power from on high, to make the Sinner willing to forsake all and every Sin, and heartily

heartily receive Christ upon Gospel Terms. *Psalm 110.*
 They will not else come to Christ for Life. Yea, *2, 3. Eph.*
 No man can come, save, whom the Father draws. *1. 19, 20.*
 Yet on the other hand. Be as shy of Opini- *Phil. 2. 13.*
 ons that corrupt the Doctrine of Grace. The *Joh. 5. 40.*
 Spirit of God worketh in us both to will and to do: *Joh. 6. 44,*
45.

But think not, that therefore we are to do nothing; for we must do whatever lies in our Power; and then, we are in God's Way, to receive more Power. God the Author of Nature has endued us with rational Faculties, and we are to make use of them; He hath appointed Means whereby Grace is to be wrought in us, and we are to attend on God in the Use of those Means; but if any live in the wilful Neglect thereof, there is no Ground to *Prov. 8.*
 expect that God's Spirit will work Grace in *32, 33, 34.*
 them. Remember this one Thing; put forth *Isa. 40.*
 all your Power, to get Grace and Glory; be *31.*
 as diligent as is possible, to make your selves Holy and Happy; and when you have done your utmost, depend on the Spirit of Grace, to work in you, all the good Pleasure of his Will, as if you had done Nothing. For it is *Eph. 1.*
 not of him that willeth or runneth, but of God that *11.*
 sheweth mercy. This is my first Advice, Be *Rom. 9.*
 sound in the Faith: and to that end observe *16.*
 these Two Things.

1. What God hath joined together, you must never put asunder; the Word and Spirit of God must always go together. If any pretend to Revelations and Raptures, what they say is not to be heeded, if it is not according to the written Word. God may reveal to some Persons, some future Events of Providence: but these are not New Articles of Faith. *Joh. 16.*
13.
Deut. 4.
2.
Prov. 30.
6. Isa. 59.
21. Rev.
22. 18.
 He shall not add to the Word that I command you.

C

2. Take

2. Take great Care to have a holy, learned Ministry. A Minister should have a good Measure of Learning, to expound and apply Scripture: But had you a Pastor of the greatest Abilities and Learning, *that* will not do without Holiness: Lights and Perfections are the *Urim* and *Thummim*, in *Deut.* 33. 8. and must be in every Minister.

1 Tim. 4.

16. Acts

20. 28.

Hebr. 13.

17.

II. I would have you *keep to the same way of Worship* which I have preached, professed, and ever practised among you. I live and die in the Persuasion, That it is in all Things according to the Gospel, so would not have you deviate from it. As you keep the great Truths of the Gospel without mixture of Errors, so keep up Gospel-Ordinances in their primitive Purity, without mixture of Humane Inventions, Rites or Ceremonies, Jewish, Heathenish or Antichristian. We are to

Joh. 4. 21,

23.

Phil. 3. 3.

Rom. 7. 6.

Exod. 20.

3.

Col. 3. 17.

1 Tim. 2.

5.

Rom. 8.

26. 27.

Jude 20.

Heb. 11.

4. 6.

Heb. 12.

28. Ps. 2.

11.

Mat. 5.

23.

1 Tim. 2.

8.

1 Joh. 1.

3. 2 Cor.

13. 14.

worship God in the Spirit. Jehovah, the only true God, and no other, is to be the Object of your Worship, and all your Addresses to him must be thro' Jesus Christ the only Mediator. You cannot be spiritual Worshippers, without the gracious Aid of God's Spirit. Nor can you be accepted in your Addresses to God, unless your Persons be united to Christ by Faith, and so in a State of Justification. In all Acts of Worship, we should be exercising the Graces of the Spirit in us. *Serve the Lord with Fear*; and be in Charity with Men. And seek therein to experience Communion with God more and more; and some further Conformity to him, that you may come off from Duties, with more Divine Impresses, and so may be more Spiritual, and Heavenly-minded.

But

But as to Ceremonies devised and imposed by Men, in God's Worship, *stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. And be not the Servants of Men.* If he with his Blood hath purchas'd you a Freedom from the Ceremonies, which God himself did once enjoin, much more from all Humane Ceremonies. In all Matters of Faith and Worship, none has Authority over your Consciences but God. Give all due Respect to Men whom God hath set in Authority, and observe their Injunctions, so far as they agree with God's Commands. But if any impose on you in Religion, what the great Law-giver hath not imposed, such do entrench on his Prerogative, and we must with holy Boldness bear a Testimony against them. So did Daniel and his Companions. So did the Apostles. *Render to Caesar* readily, and for Conscience sake, what is due to Caesar. It is from an Antichristian Spirit that any take upon them to impose Doctrines and Forms of Worship which Christ hath not imposed. Such Adulterating of Christ's Ordinances marrs their Native Beauty and Glory. Men do thereby take upon them to be wiser than Christ and his Apostles, telling us, it is most *decent* and *orderly*, that the Ordinances should make a pompous, magnificent Show: But what is nearest to Christ's Prescription, is really most decent.

It's obvious, that some lay greater Stress on observing these Ceremonies, than on keeping of Christ's Commands; and see what the Scripture says of such: that many such Worshipers *have a form of Godliness without the Power of it.* One End of Christ's coming, was to put an End to Mosaical Ceremonies; for Christ was signify'd by them; and when Christ was come, there was no more Occasion

Gal. 5. 1.

1 Cor. 7. 23.

Mat. 23.

9.

Mat. 10. 18.

Dan. 3.

16.

Act. 4. 18.

Rom. 13.

5, 6.

Rev. 13.

16, 17.

1 Cor. 7.

40.

Isa. 29.

13, 14.

Mat. 15.

9.

Col. 2.

14. Eph.

2. 14, 15.

of them. So that to keep them up still, is to make void one End of his Death, or virtually to deny that he is come. And it is plain, that Patrons of Ceremonies prove *Persecutors*: for to inflict Penalties on Persons for their walking according to Christ's Rule, and the Dictates of Conscience regulated by the Word, is *Persecution*, tho' it be by the Law of the Land: The Spirit of Christ and the Gospel allow no such thing: He sends to
 Luke 14. 23. *compell Men to come in. i. e. only by the most forcible persuasive Arguments laid before them, to convince them, that it is their Duty and Interest to comply freely to Christ's Calls.*

III. As you are a Society or Spiritual Corporation, it must be your great Care and Concern to *keep up the Discipline of Christ*. As single Christians are to observe Christ's Rules for managing their Hearts and Lives aright:
 Phil. 1. 27. 1 Pet. 2. 12. So particular Churches having solemnly given up themselves to the Lord, should observe the Rules which the Lawgiver has prescribed for such Societies; and that I call the Discipline of Christ, Col. 2. 5. or Order of the Gospel. Every Family is to have Government and Order in it; like as every Corporation, City and Kingdom are ruled by their feveral Laws. Christians consider'd as uniting and agreeing to keep up the Truths and Ordinances of Christ, are a Church of Christ,
 1 Tim. 3. 15. *the House of God, and a Spiritual Kingdom.* Therefore they must have Government as the
 Heb. 3. 5, 6. *City of the Lord our God.* To this House, the
 Psal. 48. 8, 12. — Church of Christ, there is a Key, both of
 122. 3. Doctrine and Discipline, to be made use of in
 Eph. 2. 19 to 22. the Name, and by the Authority of Christ,
Matth. 16. 18, 19. When a Church of Christ doth doctrinally declare, That Impenitent Sinners

Sinners are bound over to Wrath; or pronounces the Penitent to be pardoned of God thro' Christ, God ratifies their Sentence in Heaven. When any Member of the Church is justly excommunicated, and for Obstinacy in Sin, is bound over to Wrath; or when such a Member is absolved by the Church in Christ's Name, upon giving good Evidence of Repentance, the Sentence is of Force. It belongs to this Discipline of Christ, that you carefully observe the Laws of Christ, declaring who shall be *admitted Members of his Church*. They must be *visible Saints*, that is, according to a Judgment of rational Charity, Saints indeed. They must have competent Knowledge in the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, and so be able to make Confession of the Faith, as *Peter* did, *Mat.* 16. 16. and going on *from Principles to Perfection*. And surely Saints must be of holy, blameless Lives: So were the Apostolical Churches constituted: They must all understand the Duties of Church-members, both towards *them that are over them in the Lord*; and towards one another; and towards *those without*. And they should be able to *admonish one another* for mutual Edification. See that such only be admitted or receiv'd: But if any Member of the Church prove scandalous, as that unclean Person, *1 Cor.* 5. and do not give Proof of true Repentance, such being apt to infect others with their Sin, are to be cut off from the Communion of the Church in the Name of Christ. Or *delivered to Satan for destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved*. So, if any do err in a fundamental Article of Faith, and persist therein, without Repentance, such are, after a first and second Admonition to be cut off, *that they may learn not to blaspheme*.
 And

1 Cor. 1.
 2, 4, 5, 6.
 7.
Rom. 1. 7.
Eph. 1. 1.
 3. 3.—2.
 19. 22.
Phil. 1. 1.
Col. 1. 2.
 3, 6.
1 Thes. 1.
 2, 3, &c.
Heb. 6. 1.
Col. 4. 17.
1 Thes. 5.
 12, 13.
1 Tim. 1.
 19, 20.
Tit. 3. 10.

2 Cor. 2.
6 to 11.

And if the Sin of a Member seems not to be great, in it self, yet, Contumacy in that Sin is judged a sufficient Cause of Excommunication; for to despise the Care and Authority of a Church, increases the Offence, *Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17.* But when a Person that was justly excommunicated, gives Evidence of Repentance, that Sentence is to be taken off, and the Person to be receiv'd again; whereby the Church *confirms its love* to the Penitent. Be ye carefull to keep up this Holy Discipline in this Church.

IV. For maintaining the Practice of Godliness in all the Parts of your Conversation, I beseech you, take heed to these following Advices.

1. You that are a Church of Christ, should as constantly as you can, attend on the Administration of God's Ordinances in this Church, as the Primitive Christians did, *Acts 2. 42. Acts 20. 7.* And without very just Cause, none of you should be absent from Church-Assemblies, *Heb. 10. 25.* For if *one* may be willingly absent, so may *all* the rest; whereby the Society would be shortly dissolved.

1 Cor. 1.
11, 12.

2. You the Members of a Church, should be careful not to go into Factions and Parties, as some Corinthians did. They overvalued some of the Teachers for their Gifts, Parts or Eloquence; and slighted others that were not so gifted. Now, concerning them that did so, it appears, that they experienced little of the Work of the Holy Ghost on their Hearts, by the Ministry of those they had in such Admiration; only their Ears were tickled with high Words, or fine Sounds: Therefore the Apostle sticks not to tell them,
They

They are Carnal, and not Spiritual. And the ¹ Cor. 3.
Men they magnify'd and cry'd up, did, by ^{1, 3.}
making a Shew of their Gifts, seek popular
Applause, more than the Glory of God, or
doing Good to Souls: Christ's sincere Servants
preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, ² Cor. 4.
and that *not in the enticing Words of Mans Wis-* ^{5.}
dom, but in the Demonstration of Spirit and Power. ¹ Cor. 2.
^{1, 4, 5.}
The Blessing of the Gospel is not owing to
the Preacher's Gifts; the best Ministers are
but Instruments in God's Hand, who makes
this, or the other Minister useful, according to
his Sovereign Pleasure, ¹ Cor. 3. 5, 6, 7. If Men
put their Gifts to other Uses than God gave
them for, they rob him of his Glory, and are
like to have their Gifts blasted, ¹ Cor. 12. 4, 5,
6, 7. But let no Parties be fomented amongst
you, by this, or any other Occasion. You'll have
many Enemies from without; therefore avoid
Divisions among your selves.

3. As your Calling is High and Holy,
study to *walk worthy of it, unto all pleasing*: be- ^{Eph. 4. 1.}
ing fruitful in every good Work. Be Holy in ^{2, 3.}
all Conversation, and so *adorn the Doctrine of* ^{Phil. 1.}
God our Saviour. As ye have Spiritual Privi- ^{11. 27.}
leges, and Assistance beyond others, ye should ^{Col. 1.}
be more Spiritual in Practice, and do better ^{10.}
than others, *that seeing your good Works, they* ^{Phil. 2.}
may glorify your Father in Heaven. Be wise as ^{15. 1} ¹ Pet.
Serpents, but harmless as Doves, and walk so ^{1. 14, 15.}
warily, as to *give no Offence to Jew or Gentile.* ^{Mat. 5.}
Offences must and will come, but *Woe to that* ^{16, 46, 48.}
Man by whom the Offence cometh. ^{Mat. 18.}
^{6, 7.}
¹ Cor. 10.
^{32.}

4. You that are a Church of Christ, should
excell the World in *loving one another*: Its ^{Eph. 5, 1.}
Christ's new and great Commandment, ^{2.}
whereby all Men should know his Disciples,
^{Joh. 13. 34, 35.} ^{Eph. 4. 31, 32.} ^{Phil. 2. 2, 3, 4.}
^{Col. 3. 12, 13, 14.} ¹ ^{Thes. 4. 9, 10.} ¹ ^{Pet. 1. 22.}
¹ ^{Joh.}

1 *Joh.* 3. 11, 14, 18, 19, 20. Ye should so *increase and abound in Love*, as to be ready to do all Offices of Love to Souls and Bodies; forgiving, forbearing and succouring one another; and let each one esteem another better than himself; and look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man also on the Things of others, aiming and desiring to serve their Interest as your own.

5. You should *watch over one another* for Good, and not for Evil, and *consider one another to provoke unto Love and good Works*. If you see, or hear any Thing amiss in your Brethrens Conversation, go and tell them plainly of it, in Faithfulness to their Souls: but *take not up Reports* against them, or spread such Reports to others, as Whisperers and Backbiters use to do; and other *busy-Bodies*, or idle Persons, to the Destruction of true Love: Such disorderly Persons are Make-bates, and the Pests of all Society, 1 *Thes.* 4. 11. 2 *Thes.* 3. 11, 12. Take great Care that none of you *go about as a Tale-bearer*. And if any do so, let an angry Countenance drive away a backbiting Tongue.

6. It were well if every Church could and would see at least to *set their own Poor at Work*, or, however, take Care that no Member thereof want Necessaries. The primitive Christians were free-hearted on this Occasion, *Act.* 2. 44, 45. — 4. 34 to 37. And an Office of *Deacons* was erected for this very Purpose, to look after the Poor, *Act.* 6. 1, 2, 3. All should be ready to *distribute to the Necessities of the Saints*. And if we thus *sow bountifully*, so shall we *reap*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 1, 2, 4. — 9. 1 to 8. It is for our Trial that we *have the*

Gal. 6. 10. *Poor always with us*.

7. They

7. They that are a Church of Christ, knowing that *it is more blessed to give than to receive*, should study how they may *be a Blessing to all that are about them*. To which End they should consult how they may propagate the Gospel to others, and promote some good Work in the World, and be Examples to others in their Places, that they may not be Unfruitful.

Ezek. 34.

26.

1 Thes.

1. 7, 8.

Tit. 3. 8,

Finally, The Members of a Church should

14.

be much in the Duties of mutual Edification, as by

Holy Conference, &c. Building up your selves on

Mal. 3.

your most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.

16. 17.

These are some of the Things, wherein the

1 Thes. 5.

Churches should excell others in Conver-

11. Jude,

sation.

v. 20.

V. Now, to preserve among you Primitive Doctrine, pure Ordinances, strict Discipline, and the whole Practice of Godliness in its Power, and not only in Form, or fair Outside, I know of no one Thing that more concerns you, than *your being more than ordinarily careful in your Choice of one to succeed me as your Pastor*. Oh! that he may be a Man after God's own Heart, to feed your Souls with Spiritual Understanding. Ye know, the Means are to be always suited to the End. Whatever were Christ's Ends in Instituting a Gospel-Ministry, and erecting a Church in the World: You must have all those Ends in your View when ye go about to chuse a Pastor, else you are in Danger to commit a fatal and fundamental Error. Let your Choice be such as may in some good Measure answer all God's Ends; viz. That the present Members of the Church may be more and more edified in their most Holy Faith; That serious Persons may be made more serious, and not less so; and that Sinners yet asleep in their Sins may be awaken'd, convinced, and their Hearts turned to the

Jer. 3. 15.

D

Lord:

Lord: These are the Ends for which God appointed a Gospel-Ministry; *Acts* 26. 17, 18. You had need therefore have good Evidence of the Person you chuse for your Minister, that he be One that is very serious himself, and who hath Experience of a Work of Evangelical Conversion upon himself, else he is not
1 Tim. 1. like to be Instrumental in converting Sinners;
12, 13, 14. or to keep up and increase Seriousness in others. Wherefore

1. Begin not this Business of chusing a Pastor, till each of you apart, and All of you together, have, with solemn Seriousness and Sincerity, intreated the Lord, That He himself would chuse for you, and would direct and manage all your Spirits in this important Matter; as *Acts* 1. 21. to 24. Christ himself by his Practice has left us a Precedent in this Case: When he would chuse his Twelve Apostles, he first spent a whole Night alone in earnest Prayer; *Luke* 6. 12, 13: And so he directs us to pray God to send forth Labourers into his Harvest. The Prayers of the Faithful, if any thing, will prevail. Christians should
Mat. 9. 36, 37, 38. in every thing make their Requests known to God;
Phil. 4. 6. much more in such a Work as this, wherein the Glory of God, and the eternal Welfare of their own immortal Souls, and of their Families and Posterity, are so deeply concerned.

2. After such serious Prayer, look narrowly into your own Hearts, and every one of you be able to say, as in the Sight of God, 'Thou I esteem such or such a Man that is proposed, for some deserving Excellency in him, yet, by God's Help, I resolve in this Matter to lay aside all carnal Considerations, and I will give my Vote for no one, however near or dear to me, without some probable Grounds to conclude, That, by the Blessing

‘sing of God, he is like to answer the afore-
said Ends of erecting a Church; for his
Holiness, Gravity, and solid Seriousness,
as well as for his Learning, 2 Cor. 6. 3, 4.

‘Approving our selves as the Ministers of God by
Purenese, &c.’ The spiritual Gifts are a 1 Tim. 4.
12.—6.
11, 12.
2 Tim. 2.
22.

great Excellency and Ornament of a Mini-
ster; and the Holy One may work by a gifted
Judas, while he hath not discovered his rotten
Heart by overt Acts; (and an unsanctify’d
Man may by Industry acquire great Abilities),
yet where Gifts are without true Grace, its
very rare that God makes use of such Mini-
stry to do good to many Souls: For such Men
commonly have more regard to their own
Honour than God’s: And others foolishly ad-
mire them, while they gain no real Spiritual
Advantage by them, but only feed as upon a
little Air and Ashes; and so, like Persons in
a Dream, fantasie themselves to be at a rich
Feast, but awake Hungry, Isa. 29. 8. Zech. 4.
6. The Lord’s Work is not carry’d on by hu-
mane Power, but by his Spirit, 1 Cor. 1. 18,
19, 20, 21.

3. When any One is propounded to your
Choice, I would have you get the best Infor-
mation you can, That he is One whom God
hath owned to be an Instrument in the Con-
version of some Sinners: I will not say, That
every one whom God puts into the Office of
the Ministry, hath Success therein: but there is
Nothing in the World that a faithful Minister
doth more design and endeavour than the
Salvation of his own and others Souls. To
succeed in that, is much to his Content;
and without that Success, no Profits or Ap-
plause in the World gives him any Satisfaction.
This is the chief of his Concern: This puts
him on looking up to God for Direction and

Help to speak *Words in Season* to the Hearers Souls : In private Study his Eye is upon that ; and he seeks to have the Truths he preaches to others, imprinted on his own Heart ; and when he has delivered his Sermons, tho' it be so as the Hearers are pleased, he thinks not that his whole Work is done, unless he find that some can say from their Experience, that the Word preached was *the Power of God to their Salvation*. If it be found so, that's his great Rejoicing : But if not, then he hath Sorrow of Heart, and enquires the Cause thereof, in himself or in the People ; earnestly desiring that all Obstructions may be removed. If he hath been long with a People, and has no visible Success, he would be glad if God's Providence would open a Door to him elsewhere : This is a *man of God* indeed, but rare to be found in our Day : The Lord find out such a One for this Place ! *I seek not yours, but you : I travail in Birth again, until Christ be formed in you.* I took Pains for your Conversion from Heathenism ; and now, since I hear of your embracing a pernicious Error, I am in new Pains, and my Travail will never be over till you are confirm'd in the true Knowledge of Christ, 1 Cor. 4. 15. Isa. 49. 4. — 53. 1. 1 Cor. 16. 8, 9. 2 Cor. 2. 12, 14, 15, 16.

4. Chuse One that is truly humble ; One that is not lifted up by his Gifts and Accomplishments, tho' he hath some Spiritual Attainments or Enjoyments above others : He looks on all that he has, as low and mean in Comparison of what they might, and shoud be ; and of what some others have, and the Greatness of his Work requires. If Success attends his Labours, he sees no Cause to arrogate to himself the Honour thereof ; So St. Paul, 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10.

2 Cor.

2 Cor. 12.
14.
Gal. 4. 19.

2 Cor. 2. 14. He would have every Thought of his subjected to Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. If self-exalting Thoughts rise, he is humbled for them before the Lord. If any cry him up, he cannot bear it : If any will in Love tell him of his Failings, he takes that as a real Kindness, Psal. 141. 5. He is free and familiar with the poorest and meanest of them that fear God, Psal. 119. 63. His Garb and Apparel show his Humility, and an Exemplary Gravity is in every Part of his Conversation.

A Bishop is to be *Κόσμιος*, of good Behaviour : 1 Tim. 3. Modest and lowly both in the Temper of his

Mind, and in external Habit, and Manners; wherein, there is a certain Decorum belonging to his Holy Office. The old Puritans, did above all Things, study to adorn their Minds with Spiritual Graces, and to Evidence the Power of Godliness in every Part of their Lives : Also their outward Habit was sober, grave and modest : But Professors now, do little study to adorn their Souls with Grace, and little of the Power of Godliness appears in their Conversation : To adorn the Body with fine Cloaths is all the Humour of the present Age, especially of the Females, wherein they swerve from the Rule. But how can Ministers

preach against this Excess in others, if they

and theirs are alike gawdy, vain and expensive? 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 3. 3.

A Minister must be truly humble; for some Professors are weak, and apt to take Offence at small Matters without just Cause: Humility would incline a Minister to condescend to such, while there is Hope thereby to win them over to a thorough Compliance to Christ's Holy Ways. He must expect to meet

with Affronts and Injuries, not only from the

Prophane, but Unkindnesses and Slights from

some formal, ill-natur'd Professors : All

which

which personal Indignities he must take patiently ; *shewing all meekness to all men*, so to overcome Evil with Good. *Blessing those that curse him.* For the Practice of all this, there must be more than Flesh and Blood : true Humility will make a Man say, Let others think or speak as meanly of me as they will, I'll think more meanly of my self. Let them censure me, I'll judge my self more severely : I have deserved no such Treatment at their Hands ; but by such Means, God is doing me more Good ; I look more into my Heart ; I pray oftner ; I find out more Sins than I thought on, and repent more thoroughly than I had ever done, *2 Sam. 16. 5 to 12.*

5. When you are to chuse a Pastor, to whose Conduct you are to give up your Souls, *chuse not One too Young.* A Pastor has more Work to do than to pen a few Sermons, or deliver them with a Grace. He must be experienc'd in the great Truths of the Gospel, and in all the Concerns of Souls ; therefore had need be a Man of great Solidity and Wisdom. A young Man is apt to be too well opinionated of his Parts and Performances, and that spoils All. Where spiritual Pride is predominant, God delights not in, and seldom does Good to Souls by such. *He resisteth the proud :* and a Novice, a new Convert being *puffed up with Pride, falls into the Condemnation of the Devil.* All the Conversion that some know, is this ; They have spent so many Years in a course of Learning, and then are thought fit to preach, tho' utter Strangers to a Work of Regeneration, and true Seriousness. A Pastor had need also of a special Gift for Government in the House of God, *1 Tim. 3. 5.* He must exercise the Discipline of Christ in the Spirit of Christ ; having a Zeal

Zeal for God according to Knowledge, else he may soon do more Hurt than Good, *Jam. 3. 17.* Therefore he had need be not very young, but experienced in all Church-Affairs.

6. I make it my earnest Request, that in chusing my Successor, you will take the Judgment and Advice of Two Ministers, with whom I have most corresponded. Acquaint them who it is you have in your Eye: They will not disapprove him, but for good Reasons which they will communicate: Neither they nor I will infringe your Liberty in this Affair; but leave you, as 'tis meet, to your own free Choice: Yet, there are very good Reasons why you should have such Mens Concurrence and Approbation, whose Counsel and Help you may need afterward.

There is yet one Thing I see cause to inculcate over again: *Be more than ordinarily careful, that after my Decease, you go not into Factions and Parties on this or any Occasion.* It has always been my study, according to the Measure of Grace and Prudence that God has given me, to maintain Unity and Concord in this Society; and where-ever I had a Call to act in the Concerns of Christ and Religion, I have constantly endeavour'd to make Peace, compose Differences, and to heal Breaches among Christians; knowing there is a Blessing on such. Thro' the good Hand of the Lord upon us, you have been enabled to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace. I remember not that any such Divisions have ever been among us, as in other Societies that would admit of no Accommodation; nor have we by Disagreement, been once hindred from sitting at the Lord's Table together: But I fear how it may fare with you after I am gone: The subtile old Serpent takes all Opportunities

Mat. 5. 9.

ties to sow Discord among Christians. Oh ! that we could say, *We are not ignorant of his Devices.* This he'll endeavour among you, to make way for his further hellish Designs : Therefore you had need have on the Whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against that potent, politick Adversary. Prepare for this Attack : That very Hour that any Difference begins to appear, check your Passions, restrain the Workings of your Hearts : Go unto God by most fervent Prayer, that he may not leave you to your own Wisdom in the management of this Affair. *If any lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God ;* even that Wisdom that's *pure and peaceable* : Which will put you upon Nothing but what is for the Glory of God, and the common Good ; nor upon the Use of any Means, but what are suited to the good End you propose : It bids you deny your selves for Christ and the Gospel ; and in all Concerns of Religion, to keep close to Christ's Prescription, and to do all in a Gospel-Spirit. *Do nothing thro' strife or vain-glory.* Act not from Affection to this or that Man, but consider whether this Man is like to answer all the Ends of a Gospel-Ministry, and of keeping up a Church here. Whatever his Gifts may be, if he has not a Proportion of Gravity and Seriousness, never contend for him. If some will go into Parties, let others observe which Party is most Judicious and Serious, and join with them ; for they, to be sure, will be for the Man that's most like to promote the Power of Godliness. Oh, my dear Friends, pray, pray, pray for the Guidance of God's Spirit in this Matter, and that ye may not be left to your own Spirits. I do most earnestly beseech you by all that Love you owe to Christ, and to the Work of the

the Gospel in this Place ; by all the Love you have to the Eternal Salvation of Souls ; and by all the Love that you owe to me, hearken to this Counsel ; *Follow Peace with all Men*, so far as you can without Sin, and be at Peace among your selves. God hath called us to Peace, and his Kingdom is Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. He that in these Things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men. Therefore let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to the which ye are called in one Body.

1 Thes. 5.

13.

Rom. 14.

17, 18.

Col. 3. 15.

If after all I have said, some will follow the Counsels of their own Hearts, and go into Factions, they will greatly sadden the Spirits of the most serious, whom God would not have sadden'd ; and strengthen the Hands of Evil-doers, that none will turn from their Wickedness. And you'll give Occasion to another People to set up their Way in Opposition to what we have all along practised and professed with good Success, and which I am perswaded as I have said before, is the Way of God.

Jer. 23. 14.

Ezek. 13.

22.

O thou God of Truth, send out thy Light and thy Truth ; Let them lead us, let them bring us to thy holy Hill, and to thy Tabernacles. O, thou, who art Love it self, shed abroad thy Love into the Hearts of thy People ; then will they Love thee, and love one another. Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever, Amen. And the Lord of Peace himself give you Peace always, by all Means. The Lord be with you All.

Ps. 43. 3.

Heb. 13.

20, 21.

THE END of the LETTER.

E

Adver-

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THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
SERMON,

PREACH'D

*Before an Assembly of MINISTERS,
at Stroud-Water, June 19. 1711.*

*Hab. 3. 2. O Lord, revive thy Work in
the midst of the Years.*

THIS Prophet receiv'd from God a *burdensom* Vision, of dreadful Things shortly to be accomplish'd on the Jews, by the furious Chaldeans, *Chap. 1. 5, enlarging their desire like Hell and Death, to 6.* conquer all Nations. Soon after which, the *Chap. 2. 5. Spoiled Nations shall spoil them, because of Mens v. 8. Blood.*

Affected with this sad Prospect, the Holy Man falls to Prayer, which is the proper and chief Work of Saints and Prophets in the most dismal Providences ; for still *God is in his Holy v. 20. Temple* ; and there to be awfully adored ; the Prayer being occasioned by the Commotions and Changes in view, is accordingly *variable*, or upon *Sigionoth* ; harmonizing with the *Chap. 3. 1.*

E 2

Changes

Changes of Providence, or suited to various Appearances ; for so that Word seems to imply.

The Prayer it self begins, *v. 2.* The Prophet had heard God declaring how He would chastise his *sinful* People by a *worse* People, the Chaldean Robbers ; and then lay waste those unrighteous and cruel Idolaters ; this frightful Work put him into a Trembling, *v. 16.* to think what the jealous God would now do, and what his degenerate People must suffer in a long Captivity, as *Psal. 119. 120.* He could not *put far away the evil Day*, as the stupid Wretches in *Amos 6. 1, 3.* He could not sleep on, like a Person unmoved or unconcerned ; but taking the Alarm, *He was afraid*, as *Noah* was in the like Case : Afraid, that the prosperous Enemy would be very Cruel, very Proud, and would blaspheme God. And then, that the People being little prepared for such Trials, would faint and fall away, for *the fear of Man brings a Snare.* Even

Rev. 13. 7, 8. *Balaam* was greatly moved by what he prophetically foresaw. And have not we heard

Num. 24 God speak in Thunders in our Days ? Are we not afraid ? Oh, what is God preparing to do in this World ! What will the End be, when he thus begins ! Who shall stand ! How will this Generation do to meet him ! *Except those*

Mat. 24. 22. *Days should be shortened, no Flesh should be saved.* In such Temptations ; *the love of many will wax cold.* Therefore thus I pray, O Lord, *revive thy Work.* God's People are indeed the *work*

Isa 45. 11. *of his Hands ; created in Christ Jesus unto good Works ;* and their sinking Spirits do oft need reviving, or quickening, *Pf. 119. 25, 28, 143.* and his Power, Grace and Truth are known, by keeping their Hearts alive amidst their

Troubles,

Troubles, their killing Afflictions, *Psal.* 90. 13, 17. But *God's Work* here seems not to be meant so much of the People who bear his Name, as of his own Honour and Interest in the World, which he upholds among that People, and by their Means.

This Petition, at such a Time, implies,

1. *That in the worst Times, there is yet a Work of God in the World.* This Prophet understood what it was, and saw it in great Danger. It concerns us to know what is *God's Work* in our Times; and Christians of a publick Spirit will labour to do so. It's contrary to the *works of Men*; and the *Works of the Devil*, *Pf.* 17. 4. which Christ came to destroy. It is what the *1 Joh.* 3.8. corrupt Jews had neglected, and the Chaldeans would labour utterly to destroy.

2. *God's Work may visibly be under a Sentence of Death.* Whereupon, wise and good Men will be touch'd with an earnest Care, that it die not: Let it fare as it will with their Persons and worldly Interests: That's no great Matter in Comparison of the Interest of *God's Kingdom and Glory in the World.* That's it which toucheth them closest, *Hest.* 7. 4.

3. When the Times look frowning or cloudy, because of Iniquity abounding, or Judgments approaching, *God's People laying this to heart, should pray God to preserve and revive his Work.*

To inculcate these Truths, we may consider,

1. *What is the special Work of God in our Day?*

In all Times *the Work of God* is something that's worthy of God, and wherein he exerts his

his infinite Perfections, with a Design for his own Glory : but (as in Architecture) it consists of different Parts. *Moses* had one great Work to do for God's Name ; *Joshua* another : *David* was, by his Wars, to procure a quiet Time for building the Temple, and make Provision for it ; Then *Solomon* was to build it ; but *Zerobabel*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* had other Work ; and all was but subservient to the Main. It's the common Work of God in all Ages to maintain his Knowledge, Fear and Worship in the Earth : To keep up the Power of Godliness in the Hearts and Lives of Professors : Men are therein to work with God, and for God, or help forward what God is doing.

The peculiar Interest and Kingdom of Christ, erected by his Word and Spirit, for the Salvation of Sinners, is the *special Work of God*. This, in later Times, has been much defaced and destroyed by Antichristian Men : It was in good part retrieved by the Protestant Reformation : In that blessed Work we are all engaged, and should entirely come off from all Antichristianism, and not partake in any of the Sins or Pollutions of Popery. We should have no more Communion with it than with Paganism. As we disclaim the Papal Authority and Injunctions, we should come out from all that have and *will have* Affinity therewith ; casting off, not every Thing, that some wildly call *Antichristian* ; but whatever is solidly proved from God's Word to be so : Whatever Good the Papists retain, in Doctrine or Practice, we must not therefore disown. But,

1. Whatever Errors in Doctrine are brought in by that grand *Deceiver of the World*, we are to

Eph. 2. 10.
22.

Rev. 18. 4.
2 Cor. 6.
14, 16,
17.

to reject, and purge out, as old Leaven : For only the sincere Milk of the Word, or the pure Doctrine of Christ can be for the Health of Souls. So, whatever Inventions or Traditions of Men are mixed in God's Worship ; ^{Joh. 17.} whatever Rites are not authorized by the ^{Jam. 1. 18.} Law of Nature, nor by positive Institution of God, are to be refused as Corruptions : For we must lay the *measuring Reed to the Altar* ^{Rev. 11,} and the *Worshippers* ; that is, Try all by the ^{1, 2.} Scriptures, and reject what is not of God. When Reformation is imperfect, we must carry it on, according to sacred Rule, not humane Laws ; for in Religion, we *call no man Master*. ^{Mat. 23.}

2. We are not only to remove old, unwarranted Things, but restore the New : Set, and keep up the Doctrines and Ordinances of the Gospel in their Original Purity and Simplicity ; and the Discipline of Christ for due Order and Government of his Churches, ^{9. Isa. 8.} ^{20.} *Heb. 3. 5, 6.* For hereby Christ is exalted, and his Interest preserved.

3. The Followers of the Lamb, must in all Things walk and act as becomes the Redeemed. ^{Phil. 2. 15.} *Called, Chosen, and Faithful*, therefore ^{1 Pet. 2. 9.} *not conformed to the World*. This should appear ^{Rev. 14.} in our Families, Callings, Habits, Marriages, ^{4, 5.} and in all our Affairs. Real Saintship must ^{Rom. 12.} shine in unspotted Profession, and Holy Separation : ^{2. 1 Thes.} We must always keep the Holy Way. ^{4. 1.} *Tit. 2. 10, 11.* To maintain, improve and adorn the Reformation, is the *Work of God* in our Hands.

II. It is too visible, *that the work of God in our day is as dead, and needs reviving*. Our first Reformers laid a good Foundation, but our Superstructure answers not to it. 'Twas their
Judg-

Judgment to cast out of the Church all that Antichrist had brought in, in Doctrine, Worship or Discipline. They could not finish this at first, nor could it be rationally expected; so only purged God's House from gross Errors and Idolatries, allowing some Ceremonies a while for Trial: But have not some, since that, gone backward, or retained in their Worship and Order Things foreign to Christ's Institution? Do not some glory, to be the best Reformed, whose Spirits and Ways are Unchristian; yea, who are Enemies to the Power of Godliness? For, plainly, there is a Decay of that among Professors; we fall short of the excellent Temper of Christians in the Apostles Times, and in the first Centuries. See their Practice, *Act. 1. 14.* — *2. 42, &c.* — *4. 31, 33.* *Rom. 1. 8* — *15. 14.* *1 Cor. 1. 4, &c.* *Phil. 1. 4, 5, 6, 7.* *Col. 1. 3, 4, 5, 6.* *Rev. 12. 7.* — *11.* We degenerate too from some that continued *faithful* in the height of Antichrist's Reign, and from our *Excellent Reformers*, who had much of God's Mind *with* them, and of his Spirit *in* them. They declared God's Oracles with Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power, and when they denounced his Judgments on the publick implacable Enemies of God and his Work, their Word had Effect, as that of *Moses* and *Elijah*. Nay, are we not degenerated from our immediate Ancestors, the late godly *Puritans*, who were so eminently Holy in all their Conversation, and walked in singular Purity, Humility and Self-denial? Do we look like them?

Nay, did not some of us know, in later Times, a more serious People, eminent for a publick Spirit, a Spirit of Prayer and Faith; their

Phil. 3.
18.

Rev. 11.
5, 6.

their Enemies could not stand before them. Nay, were not we our selves, under Afflictions, (as we usually were from 1660 to 86), more serious, loving and lively than we are now, since we enjoy'd more Rest, Liberty and Peace? Thus God's Work declines; but survey it in some Particulars for Conviction.

1. We see little of God's Work in a remarkable *Conversion of Sinners* by the Word, and may complain as the Prophet, *Isa. 53. 1.---49.*

4. Many take up a Profession, who have but a name to live, and are dead in Sin: But Conversion, or a thorough Change of Mans whole Nature by effectual Grace, and turning him from all Sin, and self to God, is necessary to Salvation, *Mat. 18. 3. Job. 3. 5, 7.* And where this generally ceaseth, it's a sign of two sad Things, 1. That present Professors do not so earnestly pray for Sinners Conversion as formerly. 2. That present Ministers do not preach the converting Word with the same Holy Concernment and Demonstration of Spirit. Mr. *J. Ro.* who converted Multitudes, used the utmost Plainness of Speech therein.

2. Iniquity strangely abounds; and in Professors, Love waxeth cold: And who lays it to heart to mourn for it? As they in *Ezek. 9.* 4. *Pf. 119. 136. 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.*

3. Professors, by taking a Liberty in outward Adornings and Fashions of vain People, forget and lose their Spiritual adorning with Grace and good Works. The Spirit of God reproved this of old, and has stoop'd to give us Two Rules about Apparel: 1. That it be not more Costly than becomes our Rank; That it do not exhaust our Estate, rob our Family, nor disable us from good Works. 2. That it

1 Cor. 1.

22—25.

—2. 1, 4,

5. 2Thes.

3. 1, 2.

be not gawdy and light, as the *Attire* of an
 1 Tim. 2. *Harlot*, but modest and Grave.

9, 10.

1 Pet. 3.

3.

4. Carnal Contentions are among us, and uncharitable Divisions, which argue, that such do want the Power of Godliness, 1 Cor. 1. 10, 11. — 3. 1. 2, 3. *Jam.* 3. 13 to 17. — 4. 1. as Iniquity increases, so will Hatred and Quarrels: But,

1. The Spirit of Religion is meek and calm, very much against angry Strife, *Gen.* 13. 8, 9. *Psal.* 133. *Tot.* and the Interest of Religion suffers greatly thereby.

2. Our Lord Jesus earnestly pressed all his Followers to holy Love and Unity, as *Job.* 13. 34. — 15. 12. So did his Apostles, *Eph.* 4. *Phil.* 2. *Col.* 3.

3. The Credit, Progress and Strength of Religion in the World depends much on the Unity of Christians; therefore Christ prays for it, *Job.* 17. 21, 23.

4. Love and Unity were the Lustre and Glory of Primitive Christians, *Act.* 2. 42. *Colos.* 1. 4. 1 *Thef.* 4. 9, 10. But is it not far otherwise now? Tho' we know how Satan serves himself by our Contentions.

5. Many that are not so litigious, seem to rest in a bare Form of Worship, attending Duties and Ordinances, without experiencing the Efficacy of Grace therein, or any Communion with God thereby: True Saints are not so content, but use to prepare their Hearts for Ordinances, *Psal.* 26. 6. and to attend thereon with a serious Aim at the Ends for which God appointed them, *i. e.* for inward and spiritual Converse with God: That they breath after, *Cant.* 4. 16. and are thankful for such Communication. *Cant.* 2. 7. — 8. 4. mourning when they miss thereof, and searching the

the Cause, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2.—5. 5, 6, 7. But formal Professors rest, if they keep free from Scandals; not minding to *keep their Hearts*: Nay, they affect strange Liberties; are frothy, rash and vain as others in their Talk, and rarely utter a serious, savoury Word.

Mat. 12.

6. Some hold a religious Profession, and yet fail in Morality, in Truth and Honesty; injure their Neighbours in Goods or good Name; detain what is not their own, make no Conscience to pay their Debts, live in Malice and Envy; but surely, true Religion teaches better Things, *Rom.* 13. 8. *Psal.* 119. 4, 6. *Act.* 24. 16. *Tit.* 2. 11, 12.

34.
Eph. 4. 29.

7. Others, that dare not be false and dishonest, yet are taken up *with their own Things only*, and mind not the Things of Christ, *Phil.* 2. 21. Tho' a Man must care for himself, yet all *our Interests* we must place subordinate to the Kingdom and Interest of Christ, *1 Cor.* 10. 31, 33. *Psal.* 137. 5, 6. *1 Tim.* 6. 6. *Acts* 20. 24. as God gives us his Son and his All, we should deny our selves in any Thing to serve him, and sacrifice our Interests to his: but many will not do so. Add to all this, that many fail in particular Matters of Practice, which true Religion doth expressly teach. As, to imitate Christ in all that's imitable, *Mat.* 16. 24. to make open Profession of his Name, and to bear his Yoke, *Acts* 2. 41 to 47. *Rom.* 10. 10. *Mat.* 10. 32, 33. To be frequent in Self-examination, *2 Cor.* 13. 5. To be daily receiving Faith and Repentance, as the Jews did by their daily Sacrifices, *Numb.* 28. 3. To mortify our Members that are on the Earth, *Mat.* 5. 29. *Rom.* 8. 13. *Col.* 3. 4. To live by Faith in all Conditions, *Gal.* 2. 20. *Heb.* 10. 36. To be daily preparing for

Death and Eternity, *Psal.* 90. 12. *Luke* 12. 35, 36, 40. 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. But now, alas! these Practices are rarely found; and by all this, it may appear, that as the Work of God is sometimes in a dying Condition, so it is now among us and others, and needs *Reviving*, as in that Church.

Rev. 3.
2, 3.

3. When thus it is, *it's one great Duty of God's People to pray earnestly, that God himself would revive his own Work among us, and in the World,* which Prayer implies, 1. That Whenever God's Work is revived, He must do it: For who but He can raise the Dead? 2. That He at worst can do it; as in *Egypt*. 3. That He will do it, how, and when, and by what Instruments He pleaseth. This we must believe, in our going to God on this Errand; which, that we may do with Understanding, 1. Consider what we mean to beg in this Petition, *Revive thy Work?*

As 1. That Preachers of the Gospel, may be prepared and accomplished with a Divine Spirit and Power for their Work, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5, 6. — 10. 4, 5. That so Sinners may be effectually wrought on to Conversion, *Psal.* 110. 2, 3. *Mal.* 4. 6. *Mat.* 11. 12. *Acts* 11. 19, 21. — 13. 44. 2. That Converts may evidence sound Repentance and Faith by a holy Zeal and Affection to Christ, and to holy Things; and may be pure in Heart and Life, 1 *Pet.* 1. 14, 15. 22. Full of Prayer, *Acts* 9. 11. Enlarged to convert others, *Job.* 1. 43, &c. 4. 28. *Luk.* 22. 32. 3. That Churches may all walk in mutual Love, Concord and Peace for mutual Assistance, *Isa.* 2. 2, 3. *Isa.* 60. 15. *Phil.* 3. 15. *Eph.* 4. 3, 4. and all that follow Christ may love one another in Truth, 1 *Job.* 3. 18. and may shew it by a tender Sympathy in all Conditions,

ditions, *Rom.* 12. 9, 15. By faithful Admonitions, *Levit.* 19. 17. *1 Thes.* 5. 14. and by communicating to each others Necessities: *Acts* 2. 45. — 11. 29. 4. That Magistrates may be spirited for their Office, *Isa.* 1. 26. may proceed with regular Zeal and Courage, to put Sinners to Shame, and by executing good Laws, may be a Terror to evil Doers, *Psal.* 72. 2, 4. — 75. 4, 10. — 101. 3, 8. 5. That the Power of Godliness may be once again in Request and Honour, by Professors walking, so as to adorn it: *Zech.* 14. 20, 21. *Mat.* 5. 16. *Phil.* 2. 15. *1 Pet.* 2. 12, 15, 16. 6. That by some eminent Acts of Providence it may be seen and known, that verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; That true Godliness is Gain; That God never said to the Righteous, Seek ye me in vain; That God will honour them that honour him; That God takes kindly what Kindness is shewed to any of his, and resents Injuries done to them, *Psal.* 105. 14. *Zech.* 2. 8. Oh! that the Wickedness of the Wicked were come to an End, *Psal.* 7. 4. — 11. 4, 5. Oh! that God would turn all *Achitophel's* Counsels into Foolishness, *2 Sam.* 17. 23. *Isa.* 8. 9, 10. This we pray for.

2. In so praying, this Perswasion is imply'd That *whenever God's Work is revived, himself must do it*: It's not to be done by all our Wishes, Knowledge, Learning, Wisdom, Might, Counsel, *Zech.* 4. 6. Nor by all our Diligence, or most vigorous Endeavours, *Psal.* 127. 1, 2. *Eccel.* 9. 11. God began his own Work: His own Hand must carry it on, and finish it. And as all He has done, was for his own Name's sake, He will not lose the Glory he had gained, by letting his Work now die

die away. Nay, rather, whatever stands in the Way of his Work, He will remove, and so revive it, *Zech. 4. 7. Isa. 40. 4.* And to that End he can, when he will, turn the Hearts of the worst Enemies to become useful Friends, as *Paul, Gal. 1. 23.* And such as go on opposing, He'll crush like *Pharaoh* and *Haman*, *Psal. 110. 5.* In this Faith should we pray God to revive his Work; and that's the best that we can do.

1. Now, is there not most manifest need of so praying? Whatever Work of God is yet among us, is weak, and goes on very slow: We rarely find God with us as formerly, in the Work of Conversion, whereby his House is built and filled. I remember, when some Ministers in this County agreed to go from Place to Place, spending whole Days in Prayer and Preaching; and then it was rare but we heard of some Souls gained to Christ. Converts then had a godly Zeal for the Conversion of others, and for the grand Truths of the Gospel, and could not bear to have them depraved, or subverted; as by Deists, Socinians, Quakers, &c. But now many Professors are lukewarm, or care for none of these Things: All Doctrines are alike to them. Some declare, That Moral Honesty is enough to Salvation, and so vilifie the Gospel of Christ as needless. Others say, Come but into *the Church*, meaning their own Party, and conform to its Orders, and it sufficeth; tho' they say little of Union to Christ. Others chuse a more refined Form, yet continue Strangers to a serious, holy, praying Spirit, vital Communion with God, and a due Watch over their Thoughts and Ways; and is it not Time then to pray, O Lord! *revivethy Work?*

2. Where-

2. Wherefore, upon the Alarms in our Day, let us set to this Work, and fervently pray the Lord to revive his Interest of pure and lively Religion.

MOTIVE I. Such Prayer argues a truly publick Spirit, *Iſa.* 62. 1, 6. and therefore our Lord taught us in Prayer to mind his Honour first, *Mat* 6. 9, 10.

2. God's reviving his good Work, wou'd renew our Hope, that he will not cast us off, nor take from us the Tokens of his Presence, *Ezek.* 39. 29.

3. This would visibly weaken the Kingdom of Satan and Antichrist, and so presage the Downfal of Myttical *Babylon*, *Rev.* 14. 8. — 20. 2, &c.

4. Spiritual Reviving would draw after it many Temporal Blessings, *Ezek.* 36. 25, &c. *Joel* 3. 18.

5. This wicked Earth that grows so like Hell, would hereby become more Heavenly, *2 Pet.* 3. 13. that is, when most People become Religious, at least in a fair Appearance; Men in Power befriending true Piety, and discountenancing Profaneness. I knew when it was so in this Land: but some Heathens might now say, that Nature teacheth better than some of us Practice under the Gospel: Oh, what a Shame is this! There is need then, to pray that God's Work may revive. To which End, we should study, what is the special Work of God in our Day: We live in a Land of Light, having God's open Book to teach us, and no Man hinders us from searching into the whole Counsel of God; And dare *2 Tim.* 3. 16. we continue ignorant of God, and Christ, and our Dury? God in our Sight rescued the Reformed Religion once again out of the Jaws

Jaws of Popery, and wrought gloriously for us; and honoured such as acted zealously in that Cause, as our late King *William*, &c. and God was then seen in his Judgments on others who set against the Reformation, and ever will. This did then encourage a praying Remnant in that Work; and so it should still. Now, therefore, let our very Hearts cry to the Lord, *O Revive thy Work* of Grace once more, on the Spirits of Magistrates, Ministers, Churches and Christian Families, that all who name Christ's Name, may depart from all Iniquity.

Zec. 12.
2. 3.
Zech. 8.
21, 22.
Psal. 85.
4, 6.

3. But as *Nebemiah* and his Company in reviving the Wall of *Jerusalem* (for so is that Work called, *Neb.* 4. 2. *Ezra* 9. 8, 9.) did pray and set a Watch, even so let us with our Prayer join a faithful Endeavour to set forward the Work of God by an Exemplary Practice of Piety. See that ye be real and lively Christians; always serious in Soul-concerns: See that all your Graces be at all Times acting vigorously: That your whole Life be a Life of Faith and Holiness, and Self-Denial: That ye be faithful to God, and do all the Good ye can unto All, as ye are called. Walk in another Spirit than this Generation; in sober, unaffected Singularity; keeping up a constant, universal Watch: Walk very humbly with God, and when ye have done your best, count yourselves but unprofitable Servants.

Now there will be better Hope to see God's Work revive among Professors, when at first they lay a right Foundation of sound Repentance and Faith; and then build suitably on that Foundation: Living in the daily Exercise of that Faith and Repentance; as the Jews

Jews were taught by their daily Sacrifice. So do, and let not your Hearts hanker after any secret Sin. Be more Crucify'd to the World. Cherish and fulfil every Motion of God's good Spirit. Be deeply humbled, that hitherto ye have been no more serious. Pray more fervently to be made so: Converse most with the most serious, &c. This is the way to have your Prayer effectual, and to see God's good Work revive in our Land. And then

1. Hereby it's likely ye shall be a Blessing to others in your Day, to make them also serious and godly. *Then will I teach Transgressors thy ways, and Sinners shall be converted to thee.* Psal. 51. 13.

2. By exemplary Seriousness in private Stations, ye would grow more publick Spirited, or capable of greater Work, as ye may be called to it; as *Joseph* and *David* did: And when once ye have thus set in Order your own Souls, your Families and God's Work therein; what should hinder you to enlarge your Concern for others also, for Christ's sake? *Because of the House of the Lord our God, I'll seek thy good, O Jerusalem, Ps. 122. 9.* Do good in thy good Will unto *Sion, Psal. 51. 18.* Thus, O, our God, now *Revive thy Work, and in Wrath remember Mercy.* Amen, Amen.

G

SOME

SOME
Instructions and Directions
FOR
YOUTH,

Concerning their SOULS,

1. **I**N the First Place I recommend to you, That you study to know your Self, and then you will be for ever humble, and low, in your own Eyes : By Nature you are a Child of Wrath, conceived in Sin, and brought forth in Iniquity, loathsome, vile, filthy and abominable in the Eyes of the Holy One. Corruption hath got into your very Vitals and Heart, by Reason of which it is become as natural for you to Sin, as it is for *the Sparks to flie upward* : You love that which is Evil, and hate that which is Good : You have no Power to extricate your selves out of this your sinful and deplorable Condition ; yet, if you live and die therein, you are undone to Eternity.

2. Be thoroughly convinced of an absolute Necessity of Regeneration here, if ever you hope for Salvation hereafter. Do not think it enough, That you are born of religious

Joh. 3. 3, 5.

gious Parents, and have had a good Education: That you are instructed in the Principles of the True Religion, and are called a Christian: That you have a Measure of Moral Honesty, and are not tainted with the Guilt of gross Immoralities; but know what it is to have such a Work wrought in you by the Word and Spirit of God, that your very Nature is chang'd, *All old Things are done away, and all Things are made new.*

2 Cor. 5.

3. Cry mightily to Heaven, that the God of all Grace would take this Work into his own Hand; Pray, pray, pray most affectionately and fervently, instantly and incessantly, that you may be blest with this unspeakable rich Blessing of true saving Grace in your Soul: Without which you can neither glorify God *here*, nor be glorified with him *hereafter*.

17. 1 Pet.

1. 23.

4. Begin betimes to set forth for Heaven in good Earnest, in so doing, you will give God the best of your Time, which is a rare Duty, and you will be in some good Measure kept from the Sins and Temptations, that do usually attend Persons in their youthful Daies.

5. Be sure to lay a good Foundation of Repentance from *dead Works*, and of *Faith towards God*. Call to Mind all the Sins you have been guilty of from the Womb to this Time. Beg of God, that he would give you a Soul-humbling Prospect of your Sins: That he would work in you a godly Sorrow for Sin, as it is an Offence to an Holy God, and a Transgression of his Righteous Laws. That he would work in you a Willingness to forsake every known Sin, and to be in the Practice of every known Duty. Do not rest

Heb. 6. 1.

upon your Humiliation or Reformation ; upon your ceasing from that which is Evil, and doing that which is Good, as if you would be thereby justified before God ; But know what Union with and Interest in, the Lord Jesus, by true Faith, is : Your Repentance, and all the Good you do, hath so much of Imperfection in it, that you have occasion to say, (with respect to Justification), None but

CHRIST : *I'll make mention of thy Righteousness,*

and of thine only.

Pf. 71. 16.

Pf. 45. 24.

25. Is. 64.

6.

Luke 17.

10. Phil. 3.

7, 8, 9.

6. Do not think it enough that you are in a State of Justification and Sanctification, but know what it is to grow in Grace, and in some further experimental Knowledge of Christ : Forgetting *Things behind*, be pressing *forward*. The Work of a Christian is never at an End, so as to have Nothing more to do, nor are his Attainments and Enjoyments during the Days of his Pilgrimage so high, but that there is more may be attained and enjoyed.

7. Make use of the Ordinances of Christ, and the Opportunities afforded you from time to time, so that your Soul may prosper and thrive in Spiritual Things ; and that your Profiting may appear unto all.

8. Above all Books, study the Scriptures most, *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly* Col. 3. 16. *in all Wisdom*. Let that be the Rule by which you square all your Thoughts, Words and Actions ; pray that God will put his Laws into your Mind, and write them in your Heart.

Heb. 8.

10.

9. Remember to keep the *Lord's-Day* holy, in the whole of it, from Morning to Night, so as to be in some Duties of Worship, either private or publick : Studying to be Spiritual in every Duty ; and to sanctifie the Name of God

God in all your Drawings near unto him: To exercise Grace in every Ordinance; and to enjoy Communion with God, in order to your being fitted for the Services and Enjoyment of an eternal Sabbath in the highest Heavens.

10. Beware of ill Company, and hearkening to ill Counsel: *Have no Fellowship with the Unfruitful Works of Darkness, but rather reprove them. Evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* Eph. 5. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 33. Prov. 9. 6.

11. Make Conscience of the Duties of your Calling; be just and honest to your Master, and every one else: Wrong no one in the Worth of a Farthing: Speak Truth at all Times: Be never in a Lye: Be not slothful in Business, but be diligent and active: Mind what your Master and others say to you: Let no one speak to you twice: Give a present and ready answer where it is expected: Shew Nothing of a fullen or dogged Humour, that's a Thing unlovely in the Eyes of all: He that follows a Trade, should be affable, courteous and obliging to all: He should do what he can by all lawful Ways and Means, to get the good Word and good Will of every one. Lean not to your own Understanding, but be punctual and exact in observing your Master's Orders: When you are sent on an Errand, look upon your Time to be your Master's, and not your own; mind his Business with Care, and return with Expedition. Be not an Eye-Servant; whether your Master is absent or present, act as under an All-seeing Eye: and the Lord give a Blessing.

Amen,

At

At another Time he added as follows :

12. Associate your self with them who are visibly the most holy, humble, and serious, with whom you are like to live Eternally in Heaven. *He that walks with wise men, shall be wise.*
- Prov. 13. 20. 13. Resist the first Beginnings of Sin: Psal. 119. 63. Check its first Rising, and keep your self with the utmost Care from all Temptations that may lead to Sin. *Come not near the Snare.*
- Gen. 39. 10. Never tempt any one to Sin, nor suffer your self to be enticed by others: Keep a holy jealousy over your self at all Times. Pre-sume not upon your own Strength, as if you could venture on Temptation, and bring your self off again: But if at any time you are drawn into Sin, continue not in it; haste away: For to allow one's self in any known Sin, is inconsistent with Grace; and such can have no Communion with God, 1 *Jeb. 1. 7. Ps. 66. 18.*
14. Be frequent in secret Prayer, and that more than once every Day, and be serious in it: Begin the Morning with it; rendering Thanks to God for Mercies received; begging Pardon for Sins committed, and Grace for all the Occasions of the whole Day: Be in a praying Frame all the Day long; often sending up some short Petitions, *Neb. 2. 4.---6. 9.* Use the Words of Scripture as much as you can, and pray for a Spirit of Grace and Supplication.
15. Walk and act at all Times, as under the All-seeing Eye of the great God, knowing that you must give an Account for all that's done in the Body. Call your self to Account every Day for what hath been done amiss. Frequent Self-examination, is a great and necessary Duty. Be more or less every Day in the Exercise of Repentance and Faith. Keep
- Ecc1. 12. 14. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 2 Cor. 13. 5. Lam. 3. 40.

a con-

a constant Watch over your Heart, Thoughts, Affections, Inclinations, Passions, Words and Actions. Prov. 4. 23. 1 Cor. 16. 13.

16. Abstain from fleshly Lusts, as Things that War against the Soul, and greatly hinder you in your Way to Heaven. Look not with a lustful Eye upon Beauty. Let no filthy Communication proceed out of your Mouth; Shun all lascivious Practices and Gestures at all Times, whether alone or in Company. Prov. 6. 17.

17. If you find any particular Lust apt to prevail, give your self to fasting and fervent Prayer, by which Means you may fetch Vertue from Christ to mortifie every Corruption. *For if ye by the Spirit do mortifie the Deeds of the Flesh, ye shall live.* Be at all Times exceeding low in your own Eyes, and clothed with Humility: *For God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.* Psal. 69. 10. 1 Cor. 7. 5. 2 Cor. 11. 27. Rom. 8. 13.

18. You, whose Business is in Study, follow it with all Diligence from Day to Day, and join Prayer with it: Look up to God for a Blessing on all you do. If Knowledge increase, be not puff'd up with it, nor despise those that know less: Envy not those that out-do you; but imitate them in all that is Good. In all your studying, propose some holy, good End: Let it be your chief Study to know God, and his Son Jesus Christ, and to know your Interest in Him, and Union to Him: Let it be your Endeavour, so to know Him, as that you may truly love, honour and obey Him; and likewise that you may know what you were sent into this World for, and how you may serve Christ in your Generation, as your godly Ancestors did. Think not that acquired Learning is all, or the chief thing to fit you for the Service of the Son

Son of God : Seek for the rich *Anointing from on high*, even, a Spirit of Knowledge and Understanding ; a Spirit of Wisdom and Prudence, a Spirit of Power and of Faith, of Love and of a sound Mind, *Be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus* : and see that you do nothing at any Time that may quench, grieve, or vex the good Spirit of the Lord. *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

2 Tim. 1.
7.

John 13.
17.

* *Ἄ μακάριον ποιεῖν, ποιῶντες μακάριον.* Arist. Rhet.

The E N D.



A
Funeral Sermon

On Occasion of the
DEATH

Of the REVEREND

James Forbes, M. A.

Preach'd At

GLOUCESTER,

JUNE 3d. 1712.

By *J. N.*

2 Kings, 2. 14. — *Where is the Lord
God of Elijah.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *John Clark*, at the *Bible and Crown*
in the *Old-Change*, 1713.

A

Universal History

On the Origin of the



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A
Funeral SERMON,

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DEATH

Of the REVEREND

James Forbes, M. A. &c.

2 Kings, 2. 14.—*Where is the Lord
God of Elijah?*

NOTHING could more forcibly suggest to me the Complaint couched in these Words of the deserted young Prophet, than to find my self compell'd to appear in this bereaved Pulpit: May it never prove an Omen, that henceforth the rich Anointing which rested on the *Man of God*, who stood so long here in God's stead, shall cease from among you.

A 2

Elisha

Elisha having seen his Master carry'd up by Ministring Spirits, as in a Chariot of Fire, is on his Return to the Sons of the Prophets at *Jericho*; but *Jordan* is in his Way: In view whereof, he speaks this with a sort of Vehemence, *Where is the Lord God?* He was one of the few Faithful in *Israel*: Busy in his Husbandry, as the ancient Patriarchs in feeding their Herds. By God's Direction, *Elijah* call'd him from the Plough; and tho' he seem'd Rich, he quitted all the World to follow the Lord, and attend his Prophet where-
 1 King. 19. ever he went, pouring *Water on his hands*. Thus
 16, 19. did *Joshua* Minister to *Moses*, whom he also
 Mat. 4. succeeded; and Christ's Disciples first fol-
 21. lowed or accompany'd him. Let no Sons of
 Mark 3. the Prophets disdain to serve, and by such
 14. Example learn to Teach: For *before Honour is Humility*. This was a discouraging Time for him to *come after* *Elijah*, because of the Idolatry and Persecution of the Court, and the
 Chap. 18. common Apostacy of the People. Yet, if
 13. at that time *God touch the Heart*, the young
 ---19. 10. Man will run after the Prophet, tho' he had never aspired to the Honour of being his Successor. *Elijah* cast his Mantle over him, a Prophet's rough Garment, and God cloathed him with the same Spirit; and since ere long he must inherit the Office and Work, it was his Wisdom to keep with the old Prophet, observing his Spirit and Way. No Means so hopeful to form and season the Minds of young Ministers, as intimate Converse with the former Men of God. Hence we find the
 Acts 1. Order of *Acolytbi* in the Bohemian Churches.
 21, 22. And this seems to be the very Reason of the
 2 Tim. 3. *Schools of the Prophets* recorded in this Divine
 10, 11. History. At length came the Hour for the
 actual

actual Devolution of the Prophet's Office on him that was anointed to it : His dear Master, and wise Instructor, whom he honour'd as *his Father*, must be gone. Of which, having ^{2 King. 2.} a prophetick Notice, O, how close he cleaves ^{1, 3, 12.} to him while he may ! And when they must ^{v. 2, 4, 6.} part, the Divine old Man is willing to do his best for the Successor ; or to improve his Interest in God for him. *What shall I do for thee ?* ^{v. 9.} So ascending Saints would in their great good Will, leave a Blessing on those behind : What now doth the young Prophet chuse ? *A double Portion of thy Spirit*, q. d. I must undertake this great Ministry, for which I can have no Furniture, but that glorious, excellent Spirit : If therefore thou canst do any thing to purpose for me, Let that be my Legacy : For what should one do in such an Office, who is not spirited for the Work ? An *Idol-Shepherd*. ^{Zech. 11.} Well, this shall be granted, *If thou see me*, ^{17.} *when I am taken from thee*. This oblig'd him ^{v. 10.} to watch and pray more earnestly, and never to be out of his Company ; and so he gain'd his Heart's Desire. Nothing could Presage better than for the Sons of the Prophets, to affect much Converse with Holy Fathers, who in a little while will be taken from them. Their Spirit was their Glory : It made them honourable, useful and worthy of Imitation : Take away that, and *Sampson is as another Man*. What Trust is ^{Judg. 16.} committed to young Ministers, will never be ^{20.} kept but by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them. ^{2 Tim. 1.} Therefore Jesus granted *his Spirit to abide* ^{14.—2.} with his Church. ^{2.} Moses put the Robes of ^{Joh. 14.} dying Aaron upon Eleazar ; but he'd make but a poor Priest without this Anointing. *Elisha* dreaded that, and marked his Master so well, that

that *he saw him ascend*, as our Saviour did from Mount Olivet ; and when he saw it,

1. He Testifies his feeling of his own and his Country's Loss ; *Ab, my Father, my Father !* The Heart of a Gracious Son must rent at such a Parting. *The Chariots and Horsemen of Israel*, i. e. He whose Prayer had that Efficacy and Power with God, and whose heavenly Ministry was of that Authority with the People, in bringing their Hearts back to their God, that he did more than all the Soldiers for Defence of the Kingdom. *Ab, my Father !* Yet, this Man God took away, when in that Kingdom good People were very scarce, and his Influence and Example very needful. *He saw him no more* ; no more, and therefore as a Mourner *he rent his Cloaths*, q. d. Wo is me ! That I and my dear, but distressed Country, must no more enjoy that blessed, zealous Man of God, whom now we could so very ill spare. Alas, for poor fatherless me ! Alas, for a bereaved and defenceless Kingdom ! Alas, for a trembling, perishing World ! Alas, for a languishing, dying or diseased Church ! Whose Glory and Strength thus flie away to the Regions above. How glad was I to see and serve that holy faithful Prophet ? How happy was I in that Service, tho' my Wages were not in Silver and Gold ? But ah me, He is gone ! He is gone ! And can do us no more Service, nor can I serve him. And is the good old Father gone ? Quite gone ? What has he left his Successor ? Truly, no worldly Reversion ; no Treasure on Earth ; no written Works ; no Relique but *a Mantle*, an old cast Cloak that drop'd from him ascending : The same, it's like, whose Skirt he had once cast over him ;
which

which Mantle the young Man loved ever since, and pick'd it up. Wherefore

2. Not dismay'd with immoderate Grief, having this Mantle as a Token that now he shall inherit the Blessing he craved, he set himself on his Way, why should he stand gazing there any longer? He succeeds in *Elijah's* Honour; but, oh, to be overshadow'd with the same Spirit! Then he will follow the Prophet's Footsteps, and not fear to speak the Word of the Lord to the King and Kingdom; for he shall be able to justify it by mighty Works: He had seen the old Father divide *Jordan* with his Mantle, and with it he presently attempts the same. Walking in his Footsteps, he might best expect God's Presence with him: To trace the accustomed Ways of Holy Prophets, is to honour both them and their God, and to engage his continu'd Favour. Oh! that Youth would never despise and forsake the Ways which God did accept, and blest their Forefathers, instead of taking up their Mantle. But did *Elisha* think there was Virtue inherent in this Mantle, (as some Superstitious Fools imagine of Saints Relicks) to do the Miracle? No: Therefore smiting the River he utters the Words of the Text, and looks up, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* Importing a Prayer of Faith, Oh that I might see his Power and Glory as I have seen! Almighty God alone could open a Passage thro' *Jordan*, and if now he will do that for *Elisha*, what is it that he will not do? Some would be fond to step up into the Prophet's Chair, and not much enquire if God will uphold them in it, nor regard to have the same Spirit. It's like, such know not what Spirit

Ag. 1.11.

Psal. 63. 2.

Joh. 3. 15.

10

Psal. 114.

35.

Spirit they are of: To expect Honour from the meer Character of an Office, is too weak, without a recommending Excellency of Spirit: *He that so trusts his own Heart is a Fool,* Prov. 26. *and Honour is not seemly for such,* 1—28, 26. nor will continue; for it upholds the humble in Spirit. *Where* Prov. 29. *is the Lord?* 23. Can mean no less than to wish he were apparently here, or would prove that he is so, by dividing that River to him: Nor did he expect this Miracle either without need, or without Warrant: Nor should I ever blame a young Prophet for being earnest with God for some early Proof that he is, and will be sensibly with him in the Way that he sends him. *Elisha* is now actually the Prophet, yet this nor any Miracle is at his Command: God doth not so subject himself to any Man's Pleasure; but no fit Thing will he deny to the fervent Prayer of Faith, *Jam. I. 16, 17. I Job. 5. 14. Rev. II. 5, 6.* Perhaps *Jordan* did not open when he first smote it with this Mantle, for there was no such Vertue in the Mantle, therefore recollecting himself, and calmly smiting it again, he thus cries to his Master's God, and then it yields, that all may see *Jehovah* did it; and so Christ himself, when in Form of a Servant he did Miracles, he looked up to God; *Job. II. 41, 42. Act. 10. 38.* for faith he in *Job. 14. 10. the Father that sent me, doth the Works.* Much less can we do any thing but in his Name and Power: Therefore may we be instant with him for some necessary Pledges of his Presence in our Way, as *Solomon* was when he had finished the Temple; 1 King 8. 57. for what signify Temples, Altars, Sermons, or other Divine Ordinances, if God is not in them? And what a poor Cypher is *Elijah* or *Solomon*

Solomon, if left of God? *Elisha* cries not for his Master's Return to this World: God has determined that Point, and he decently submits; but all the Concern is for his Master's God: *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* Where is He, even He?

Some Criticks would differently translate the Text: I take our common Version, and understand it as I said, to mean a vehement Prayer. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* That is, He who was so manifestly with *Elijah*, that all *Israel* knew it. Oh! that the same *Jehovah* that has set me in his Room, would now give me this confirming Sign, that He will effectually be with me to the same Purposes as He was with my Master; a very justifiable and laudable Wish.

And who can blame us, if reminding that excellent Spirit that rested on our Fathers, the Ministers of the last Age; and the Proof thereof by the glorious Success of God's Work in their Hands; we on seeing it go backward, should also cry out, *Where is the Lord their God?* His Prophets, old or new, do not live for ever; and at their Death we know whither their God removes them: Then they are ignorant of us, and can no way help us any more. But still the Lord liveth: Oh! where is their God, who did by them advance a blessed Work of Reformation even in Troublesome Times? My good old Master *Elijah* is gone; That Cistern is broken; the Creature fails me, and I can bear that, if God abides with me, otherwise not: Therefore I cry again and again, Oh! *where is my Master's God?* The God whom *Israel* did forsake, and my Master did then cleave to; the God who own'd and honour'd my Master in

B

owning

owning and honouring him : All my Care is to have him appear with me, and for me. Oh where is He ? Ye know how just a Cause we have for the same Expostulation this Day. A venerable old Prophet is called from us. There, there ye all see his Lifeless Remains, and that Grave open to receive them : This is for us to lay to Heart, and oh may the sad Spectacle engage this Congregation so to do.

God's calling his eminently Faithful Servants from their Work, may well awaken Survivors to look out for real Proofs of the same Spirit and Presence of God continuing with them in the same Work.

The Work of God in the Hands of his People and Ministers in all Ages, is to preserve or restore, and propagate true Religion in this World. *Revive thy Work* : The Work whereby He makes himself known : His Work of New-Creation by his Word and Spirit of Grace, drawing and gathering his Elect unto Christ their Head, edifying and perfecting the Saints in him, and prospering the Means appointed to that end. It commonly fares with this good Work, according to the Spirit and Temper of the Men that have it in Hand. If they are Wise and Upright, they'll never pretend to manage it by their own Skill or Power, but in the Name of the Lord, and for his Glory. Worldly Ministers are intent on their own Subsistence and Safety ; their Cry is, *who will shew us any Good ?* But *Elisha's* hearty Concern is to see God still at his Right Hand, to carry him well through his Ministry, and thro' all the Difficulties that attend him in it ; specially now that his Master

Psal. 90.

17.

Hab. 3. 2.

Rom. 16.

18.

ster can assist, or encourage him no more; But oh that my Master's God would hold me still as one of *the Stars in his Right Hand*, and I Rev. 2. shall do worthily for him. Let him go on to ^{1.} maintain his Interest in the World, and magnify Himself by me, as he did by *Elijah*, and then I may do as great and hard Things as he, and break thro' as great Opposition, like *Moses* leading *Israel* thro' the *Red Sea*, or as *Joshua* into the fortify'd Cities of *Canaan*, or like those other Worthies in *Heb. 11. 33, 34. who, thro' Faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, and out of Weakness were made strong.* Then, tho' I by fulfilling my Ministry, provoke the Powers of Hell, as all zealous Reformers do, I shall go on, and the Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in my Hand, *Eph. 6. 10. 12. 2 Tim. 1. 7, 8.* But I can never be safe or easy without the present Help of *Israel's* God. That's all the Satisfaction which his People crave in their Work, even to find their God where he useth to be found; and so it should be ours. Let us now consider,

1. What was that Presence of God which he vouchsafed to and with *Elijah*.
2. How justly *Elisha* craves the same.
3. That God's removing *Elijah*, did justly awaken him thereunto.
4. On what Terms may that Favour be expected.

1. What was that Presence of God, afforded to his Servant *Elijah*?

It seems, that *Elisha*, in ministring to him, had been Witness of some Appearances of God to and with his Master, bearing him

thro' his Work and Trials, which he judged so necessary, that he could not be without the like : For he craves the same Assistance, Protection, Acceptance, Comforts and Success as *Elijah* had ; and which *Moses* craved before, *Exod.* 33. 13, 15. Without which we can do Nothing, especially when a swelling *Jordan* is in our Way, or any Floods are like to stop us in our Duty, *Josh.* 24. 6, 7. *Isa.* 42. 13, 15, 16. *John* 15. 5. Now, in the Text, that gracious effectual Presence of God with *Elijah*, is couch'd in the Phrase of the Lord's being his God.

And the Lord Jehovah was *Elijah's* God, in Two Respects.

1. In the common Sense of the Covenant, as he was the God of *Abraham* and of *Israel* his chosen People : He by gracious Covenant came near to them, and made them nigh to him : He became their Friend, their Patron, and their Portion : He set his Love on them, took peculiar Care of them, sanctify'd them to be his Habitation, engag'd himself and all his Perfections in all the Concern of their Redemption and Salvation, while other Nations were without *Christ*, and without God ; having not obtained Mercy. *Elijah* was a faithful *Israelite*, so God was with him, by giving him a Share in all the Riches of his precious

Psal. 73. Promises, as he doth to all such.

24, 25.

—84. 10.

2. As he was a Prophet of the Lord, God was with him, and was his God by a more peculiar Covenant, like that Covenant of *Levi*, in *Mal.* 2. 5, 8. He is called the Lord God of the Holy Prophets, Because he speaks his Mind directly to them, *Heb.* 1. 1. Or inspired them

Rev. 22.
6.

them with the Knowledge of his Counsel,
 2 Pet. 1. 21. He put his Word in their
 Mouths, and sent them to speak in his Name,
 or by his Authority, 2 Sam. 23. 2. Jer. 26. 2.
 Acts 3. 21. Whereupon this was the common
 Stile of their Messages, *Thus saith the Lord*:
 And to believe the Prophets, was to believe the
 Lord. Moreover, the Lord did on fit Occa-^{2 Chron.}
 sions, openly justify their Mission, and con-^{20. 20.}
 firm their Word by mighty Signs and Mira-
 cles, Isa. 44. 26. Act. 14. 3. Rom. 15. 18, 19.
 Heb. 2. 4. Also He being their God, pro-
 sper'd them in going on his Errand, carry'd
 Home their Word with convincing Power to
 many Hearers Consciences, and so turned
 their Hearts from Idols and false Ways to the
 Lord their God, 1 King. 18. 39. 1 Theff. 1. 9.
 However, in their Ministry, he helped and
 defended them so far as was meet; and like
 a good Master, assisted them in his Service:
He that sent me is with me. Thus the Lord was^{Joh. 8. 29}
Elijah's God, in that He richly anointed him
 for, and called him to his Office, gave him
 Spiritual Gifts, with Faith and Courage to dis-
 charge it; visibly owned him in it with Suc-
 cess; and confirmed his Word by undeniable
 Miracles. *Elisha* knowing this, doth there-
 fore pray to this Effect: May the Lord God
 of *Israel*, the God of the Holy Prophets,
 grant me the Allowance of former Prophets,
 to fit me for, and aid me in his Work. Let
 him please to appear to me and with me, as
 he used to do with *Elijah*: Let him fill me with
 spiritual Power, to plead and act for him,
Mic. 3. 8. and then let him confirm and pro-
 sper my Word, to reduce Sinners to his Obe-
 dience. This is that Presence of God that
 is here intreated; the same that *St. Paul* bego'd
 for

2 Tim. 4. for *Timothy*; *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit*; and the same which the Apostles found in their Ministrations. When God took away his Prophet *Elijah*, himself seemed to withdraw; and then, What could *Elisha* do alone? For the way of Man is not in himself; and he will be apt to marr and ruin all his Work. O, therefore, *says he*, that my Master's God will appear with me, as with him, *Isa. 51. 9.* 10. or be so effectually present with me in all my Necessities.

2. Consider now his just Reasons for that Request, and Hope.

1. *Elijah's* God had now call'd *Elisha* actually into the same Office, or to be a Witness for pure Religion and Reformation in his Day: Therefore he had ground to expect, That God who sent him, would not be wanting to him, nor let him go to Warfare at his own Charge; And the rather, because *he had seen Elijah taken up*; on which Condition it was promis'd him, to have a double Portion of his Spirit.

Jos. 1. 9.
Neh. 9.
20.

v. 10.

2. *Elisha*, in his Work, was to encounter the same Difficulties, from an obstinate Prince and a hardened People, as his Master had done: Yea, perhaps, more and greater Opposition from various Enemies: Had he not need then of the same present Power to bear him thro'? The ablest Minister, being alone, is insufficient for such Hardships, or to preserve and promote true Religion in a malignant World, 2 Cor. 3. 5. 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7. Eph. 6. 10.

3. This younger Prophet had like Passions and Infirmities as *Elijah* had, or greater; and was compassed with like Temptations: There-

Therefore, unless the Lord be with him, he might soon err from his Way, or be discourag'd in it : Only the Lord can sustain him with his Hand, *Isa.* 42. 1, 4. Hence *Moses* and *Solomon*, in the beginning of their Way and Enterprizes for God and his People, were so earnest for his sensible Presence with them ; and surely *Elisha* had now a like Sense of his Case. Woe to the Minister whom God forsakes !

4. God's Honour and Interest in the World were now equally concerned in the young Prophet's faithful and honourable Discharge of his Office, as he was in *Elijah's* : What then will he do for his great Name ? Or rather, What will he not do for his own Glory in the World ? For should the young Man be left to miscarry in his Work, great Mischief to Religion must ensue, which nothing but God's Presence with him could prevent. The old Deceiver will soon beguile and mislead any of us by false Colours, if left to our own Spirit : We are Weak, Rash, and easily perverted in our Thoughts, Judgments, Inclinations and Affections, and often know not what Spirit we are of ; and then, what woful Work we make in the House of God, let *The History of Bishops and their Councils* declare. 'Tis the Lord himself must build his House, and bear the Glory, *Zech.* 6. 13. And when he does so, he takes away from the Priest his filthy Garments, cloaths him with Change of Raiment, and sets a fair Miter on his Head, *Zech.* 3. 4, 5.

From these few Hints, we see Reason enough of the Young Prophet's expostulating, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah ?* And surely in all Ages there will be the same Cause.

3. God's

3. God's removing the faithful old Prophet from his Work, was a just Occasion for the Successor thus to pray, and may well awaken us also thereunto.

1. Because such Mens Deaths or Removes (especially from a backsliding People) give Suspicion that God has been provok'd thereto by misimproving his Messengers, or frustrating their Message or Ministry. In that case his calling away the best seems to threaten, that himself will depart, and take away the Glory from untractable People; and he will surely do so, unless they repent, and detain him by humble Supplication. It's then Time to lay hold on him, deprecate his Wrath; *for by whom shall Jacob arise?* What can we think in our Day, when God calls from us so many of his Friends, eminent Servants, and zealous Witnesses, but that he resents our ill Carriage, and is about to remove our Candlestick, unless we saw such others raised and acting in their Spirit?

Amos 7.
2.

Mic. 2. 6.

2. This should awaken our Prayer, because of the woful Consequences of God's taking away his Faithful Witnesses. They were Lights of the World, Monitors to Men, and Mediators for sinful Men by fervent Prayer to God to turn his Anger away, as *Moses* and *Samuel* did. All these good Offices cease when they are remov'd, and all other their faithful Labours, whereby they under God were a Safe-Guard to his People, as *Elijah* was both *the Chariots and Horsemen* of Israel, and a happy Guide to the Sons of the Prophets by his wise Instruction and Example. Take away such, and then what Calamities may not invade? What Ruins on every part of the Work of God which they carry'd

carry'd on? *Grievous Wolves will enter after* Acts 20.
Paul's Departure, and Woe to the bereaved 29.
 Flock, if but *foolish Shepherds* succeed the true;
 but when the Lord calls *Moses* to Rest, if *Jo-*
shua rise in the same Spirit, and God appears
 with him, in like Operations, all shall yet Zech. 4.7.
 do well. The same Spiritual Anointing up- Hag. 2. 4.
 on Successors, is the great Provision that 5.
 God has made to preserve the Truth and John 14.
 Power of Religion in this World. Therefore 17, 25.
 may his People use a Boldness of Faith in
 begging his promised Spirit, which would
 make the *weak among us be as David*, and Da-
 vid as the *Angel of the Lord before them*; for he Zech. 12.
 gives Power to the faint, and to them that have no 8.
 Might he increaseth Strength. So faint and fee- Isa. 40. 29,
 ble are we become by losing our Fathers and 31.
 Strong Men, our Glory is fled away, and it's
 time to cry out, *Where is the Lord, our Father's*
God? And did we so pray in good earnest, or
 pour out our Hearts in Prayer, that were the
set Time for God to arise and favour Sion; just as Psal. 102.
 upon *Elisha's* anxious Prayer, he open'd For- 13, 17.
dan, and the Prophet passed over, he is a
 very present Help, and loves to yield to his
 Servant's Intreaty. It remains to shew,

4. On what Terms may surviving Suppli-
 cants expect God's appearing with them and
 for them, as he did with and for their Fa-
 thers?

On the same Terms, no doubt, as *Elisha*
 here obtain'd the same Favour; he walking
 in the same Spirit as his Holy and Faithful
 Master, *Elijah* had done; the one was term'd,
A Man of God, and so was the other; let us
 only observe what that Character means, and
 how they answer'd it, and do accordingly.

Moses was term'd *A Man of God*, Deut. 33. 1. and so *Samuel*, 1 Sam. 9. 6. So were the Holy Angels appearing in humane Form, and sent on Errands to Men; and so were the Holy Prophets commonly stiled; and so *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 5. 11. so *Elijah*, 2 Kings 1. 9, 10. and *Elisha*, cap. 4. 9. 16. Now to be a *Man of God*, contains all that which is still requir'd towards enjoying the Presence of God.

1. *A Man of God* is one whom God the Father of Spirits hath formed anew by Grace *for himself and like himself*: A Man truly God-like in his Temper, Purposes and Actions, as if he had dropt out of Heaven; of a more excellent Spirit and Design, and Way, than
 1 John 5. other Men, putting on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 19. and Spiritually minded as he.

2. *A Man sent out from God*, as the Prophets and Angels were, and as *John Baptist* was,
 John 1. 6. Authoriz'd to speak in God's Name, or as God's
 1 Sam. 2. Ambassador, and so to treat with Men about
 27. all their Affairs with God.

3. A Man like the Holy Angels in this,
 2 Tim. 3. that tho' sent out unto Men, *they continue still*
 17. *with God, and behold his Face*. A Man that is
 Matth. 18. much, and familiar with God, as in Prayer,
 10. and God therein meets and converses with
 Act. 6. 4. him.

4. *A Man that is truly and wholly devoted to God's Honour and Service*, acting therein with pure Zeal and Singleness of Heart; nor biass'd by worldly Influence, nor halting between God and *Baal*: The Court and the Soldiers knew *Elijah* to be a Man of God by his extraordinary Spirit and Way; God's peculiar Favourite; the Man of his Secret; intimate in his Counsel, acquainted with his Purposes,

Purposes, and a faithful Witness of his Will to Men.

He was a Man *all for God*, appearing on his Side when the Ten Tribes of *Israel* so generally fell away, to Worship *Baal*, as *Moses* and the *Levites* did of old. He kept himself pure from that reigning Sin in the polluted Land, and testify'd plainly and boldly against it, being *very jealous for the Lord God of Israel*. For a Man of God must always be zealously affected in a good matter; thus was *Elisha*, a Man Anointed and called of God to his Office, and true to God in discharging it, and doubtless like *Elijah*, and all the holy Prophets, he was much with God in Prayer, and owned of God in his Work; faithful in his Allegiance to God in all Discouragements, not bias'd by all the Terrors of the King.

Upon these Terms God would be with his other Servants in the Work he sends them about. *John Baptist* being zealous and impartial in reproving Sin, and calling to Repentance, and testifying of Christ to the *Jews*, God honoured him: So faithful was *Paul* in the Churches, and so successful; so were *Moses* and *Samuel* in their Day, following the Lord fully: Now, like these *Men of God*, let us be *the People of God indeed*, separated to himself from the common World, devoted to his Fear and Honour, and constant in his Covenant, and that among all Temptations and Backslidings; and doubtless God will then be intreated to be with us, as he was with our Fathers, and we may expect this will in due Time appear to our selves and others.

But alas! our degenerating from this Spirit and Practice forfeits all; for if instead of being *holy Men of God*, we Ministers and Chri-

2 Chron.
15. 2.
Malach.
2. 5, 6.

stians prove but *men of the Earth*, worldly in our Spirit, Purpose, and Conversation: If we venture on our holy Calling without a holy Anointing: If young *Elisha's* disdain the Company and Counsel of Holy, Grave and Wife *Elijah's*, whereby they should be baptiz'd in the same Spirit, as 2 *Tim.* 3. 10. compar'd with *Phil.* 2. 22. If they grow vain, light, heady, self-confident, self-pleasing and self-seeking: If they more affect and converse with the Children of this World, than with the Saints, the Excellent of the Earth, or more than with God and their Bibles: If they restrain Prayer, wherein the Prophets use to abound: If they cast off holy Fear, and adventure into the broad Way of the Multitude, then indeed they may long cry, and to little Purpose, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* For by the Rule of his Covenant, and the Practice of Ancient Times, *the Lord is with us, while we are with him.* If the Sons of the Prophets be corrupted in Schools, or neglected there, then are our Fountains poison'd, and we are Undone, Undone. If due Care is not taken that these outshine others in Humility and solid Piety, as well as in acquired Knowledge, and that their Spirits be divinely prepar'd to attend on God, and minister in his holy Things: Then we do really give way to a Foreign Spirit, and that Spirit will enter, and turn all Things upside down. 'Tis here, here the Protestant Churches have been deadly wounded, even by many degenerate Ministers, *Not men of God*, and here must we begin to reform.

We have now taken some view of our Prophet's present Concern of Mind, what it was for, what Reason he had for such Concern;

cern; what he pray'd for; what Faith, and what Fear seem to be imply'd in his Prayer. The old Prophet's Death awaken'd him to this solicitous Out-cry, and it's well for us to find it recorded, that his Prayer met with Success; for we so praying may yet hope, in evil Days as his, to speed as well: And certainly we have as much need to pour out our Prayer.

And now, judge ye this Day, having such a Spectacle before your Eyes, as that dear *man of God* deceas'd, have not we cause to repeat the Prophet's Cry, *Where is our Fathers God?* Or to seek the former Proofs that yet he abides with us, tho' our Fathers are not. We all feel a heavy Hand of the holy One now, in taking from us, at such a Time, the *Venerable* Elijah of this Country; gather'd indeed like a Shock of ripe Corn in its Season, for he was *full of Days*, compleating his *Four-score and third Year*; but where have we another now, every way so valuable for Interest in God and Men, and capable to fill his Room?

I think it's to little Purpose to tell you of his Parentage and Descent from an Honourable *Scotch* Family, a Branch whereof is now *Earl of Granard in Ireland*. His Education was in his Native Country, Learned and Pious, among the Sons of the Prophets at *Aberdeen*, where he soon obtain'd a Master's Degree, and coming to *England* a few Years after, was in *Oxford* readily admitted *ad eundem gradum*. It's more to his Honour that he was *born of God*, and betimes was savingly taught the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the wondrous Way of Life and Salvation by him, being designed therein to instruct others also. Wise Providence chose this City for the Place
of

of his Ministry, and in the 25th Year of his Age, brought him to labour in this Vineyard in 1654, and that in the most publick Auditory, that according to the Enlargement of his Heart for Christ, he might sow the good Seed of the Word in a large Field. Such Blessing crown'd his Work, that in few Years a select People, being mostly his own Converts, chose and called him to be their Pastor. *They gave themselves to the Lord, and to him by the Will of God, to be over them in the Lord,* as their Guide and Overseer: Some of his first Disciples (the confirming and encouraging Seals of his early Ministry) may yet remain, who with others whom the Lord added to the Church the same way, will be his Joy and Crown in the Day of the Lord Jesus. *Fifty and Eight Years,* wanting but one Month, he continued in Pastoral Care of this little Flock, except when the Jealousie of some Neighbours did him the Honour to be the Lord's Prisoner and Exile for Two or Three short Seasons; by which means he had a space of breathing from his immoderate Labours, which in the Fervour of Youth were like to shorten his Days. After Six Years Preaching the Kingdom of God there, he (with much very good Company) was removed from so publick Opportunity of Service; yet as an Ambassador of Christ, he ceased not to dispense the Word of Reconciliation where he might, nor to watch for your Souls; not counting his Liberty or Life dear, that he might testify the Gospel of the Grace of God. Now, while an Able, Holy, Heavenly, Peaceable Ministry united their Endeavours by faithful Preaching and Prayer to turn Sinners from the Power of Satan to God (as Christ in his Day did in the Cities

Cities and Villages of *Judæa*) and God gave *Matth. 9.*
 Testimony to the Word of his Grace, your ^{35.}
 old Proverb was best verify'd, *Sure, God is in*
Glocestershire. A Minister called by God,
 and Separated to Preach the Gospel of his
 Son, could not be discharg'd by Man from
 that high Obligation. Sometime the Apo- *Act. 4.*
 stles *preached the Word with much Contention,* that *19, 20. ---*
is, against unreasonable Men, who forbad to *5. 17, 18,*
speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved. *19, 20, 21.*
 and sometimes we cannot please God, and *1 Theff. 2.*
 keep a good Conscience, without doing that *15, 16.*
 which will offend some Men.

Under this Restraint our *Elijah* Preached
 those Sermons from *Psal. 73. 1. of the Goodness*
of God to his Israel in all Ages, which for con-
 firming the Churches, he printed in 1700, and
 at the same Time another small Tract, *A*
Summary of that Knowledge and Practice that leads
to Heaven, inculcating most the Relative Du-
 ties of all Christians, as *St. Paul* frequently
 did in the Hortatory Part of his Epistles. By
 this one may see, that the judicious Asserters
 of God's Free-Grace, are the sure Friends of
 Universal Godliness. There was one *John*
Elliot that troubled himself and others with a
 foolish Scribble of *the Grace of God in all Men,*
 which being not the *True Grace of God wherein*
Christian Believers stand, our deceased Friend
 took Pains to expose it in Print, for Establish-
 ing the Faithful.

For these and many greater Labours his
 Praise is in many Hearts and Churches. His
 true Character you can best read in your own
 Breasts; for ye were *in his Heart to live and die*
with you, to spend and be spent every way for your
Souls. So well he had learnt of Christ to copy
 after his holy Apostle, *Acts 20. 18, 19, 31.*
Phil.

Phil. 1. 5. 1 Thes. 2. 8, 9, 17. We are all Witnesses of his good Furniture for all his great Work, and of his gracious Spirit therein. The Word of Christ dwelt richly in him, and was familiar to him: In a right use of which deposited Treasure he *gave himself to the Ministry of that Word, and to Prayer.* He was a ready Scribe in the Law of his God, and like *Timothy*, very much acquainted with the Holy Scriptures from his Youth upwards: Being early season'd with the love of the Truth as it is in Jesus; he proceeded in the constant Study of the Oracles of God, all his Days, and daily brought forth to his Family Things new and old.

There was indeed what the Scripture calls *a Church in his House*, and it was a very valuable and useful Part of his Family Worship, every Morning and every Evening at seasonable Hours, to give the Scope and Sense of a Chapter then read; which though he was well able to do, without particular Study, yet least he should *offer to the Lord what cost him nothing*, or any worse than the *Male of his Flock*, he still premeditated that Chapter, and consulted Interpreters; so digested well what he afterward judiciously deliver'd to Edification; and in his Preparation for this and other Services he had a mighty Advantage by his rare Husbandry of precious Morning Time.

As Prayer follow'd that Instruction, He excelled in *a Spirit of Prayer*, (a Phrase I need not shun, for the scurrilous Obloquy of Fools) and as in his ordinary course Prayer was his Practice, so on special Occasions, he excited others to that Divine Exercise: Envious Observers have noted this, to the upbraiding of others, that in the greatest Necessities of the Kingdom,

Kingdom, had no Heart unto it. One of his last Endeavours to serve his Generation, was by writing a *Solemn Call to Extraordinary Prayer*; by Occasion of a furious Spirit raging thro' the Land in 1710. At which Time the County-Ministers had agreed to promote that seasonable Work. When he was but sent to, to give his Judgment on any Case in Writing, it was usually prefac'd (as many of his Sermon-Notes were) with serious Invocation of Divine Aid.

Being full of other Occupations, only the small Treatises aforesaid have passed the Press, tho' I think more of his Miscellanies were so devoted; but it doth not certainly appear which. His Episcopacy was but *Congregational*, as were the Primitive Diocesses; but he abounded in Labours therein, and elsewhere, on all fit Occasions. Nor was he weary, after Threescore Years so spent, of serving so good a Master with his very Spirit in the Gospel. God had blessed him with a firm and hardy Constitution, which he was always ready to employ to *edifie the Body of Christ*, and to assist others in promoting his Kingdom in the World. I appeal to his last Sermon to the *United-Ministers*, in June, 1711. when, under a great Decay of Natural Strength, he chearfully exerted himself beyond his Ability, in moving us to essay the *Reviving of the Work of God*, from *Habb. 3. 2.* Indeed, like St. Paul in *1 Cor. 15. 10.* He did *labour more than we all*; yet, like him in that also, no Man less valued his own Services; for he *had no Confidence in the Flesh*. Thro' all his Course, he stedfastly retained, and *testified the Gospel of God*; and from that he asserted the sovereign efficacious Grace of the New Covenant in Christ.

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against

against all that would perniciously exalt any Wisdom, Power or Righteousness in Fallen Man, whereby he might be justify'd, or recommended to God's Acceptance.

Phil. 3. 15. Yet no Man was more disposed to construe favourably the Words and Meanings of other good Men, whose Modes of Speech, concerning some Evangelical Doctrines, he could not affect; provided they did *hold the Head*, and heartily serve the Lord Christ in teaching Transgressours his Ways. This was his Principle, that *whereunto we had attained, we should walk together*, as Brethren in Christ; and *wherein we differ, we should forbear one another* in love; and so wait for increase of Light, which will arise to the Upright. And while *we all know in part, and Prophesey in part*, I see no possibility of Peace and Concord upon any other Principle.

As to publick Worship, his Judgment is best known by his uniform Practice, and to some, by a copious Writing on that Head: According to his Persuasion, he kept close to the *perfect Rule of the Word*, the true Protestant Principle of Framing and Reforming the Church; judging, that Purity and godly Peace cannot be preserved, if we open any Door to mix humane Inventions with Christ's Institutions. This made him a *Nonconformist* for Christ's sake; and having counted the Cost, he continued so, in Bonds, Imprisonments and all Trials. I have seen Bishop *Frampton's* Letters, to move him from this Foundation; but in vain, Conscience oblig'd him to *worship God in the Way that some call Heresy*: and his Accusers had Nothing against him (in quiet, or in troublesome Times) but *in the Matters of his God*. I forbear his particular

cular Sufferings, as in *Chepstow-Castle*, for a Concern in a Plot that never had any Being: In the *Northgate-Prison*, as a *Dissenting Preacher*, from which I have seen his large affectionate Letter of Counsel and Comfort to the persecuted Church, &c.

Among faithful *Dissenters* there were (and it were a Wonder indeed if in such cloudy and trying Times, there should not be) some varying Sentiments as to Matters of *Order and Discipline* in particular Churches. This first appear'd, whilst that brave *Assembly at Westminster*, 1643. were attempting some necessary Progress in Reformation: Learned, wise and good Men on both Sides had long ago come to a better Understanding, and publish'd their Judgments and Inclinations for nearer Union; and the Ministers of Two Denominations in *London* had essay'd it. Soon after the *Blessed Revolution* in 1688, most Ministers of both Persuasions thro' the Nation, thought it necessary, and a decent harmonizing with that kind Providence, to pursue the *Healing Attempt*, and abolish the dividing Names, which gave weak or worse People a handle to foment mischievous Alienations. This issued in the *Heads of Agreement*, signed April 6, 1691. Presaging some due Improvement of our glorious Deliverance from Popish Tyranny, and of our legal Indulgence. Alas! that some of unprepared Spirits soon went back from that *Pacification*; but most hearty and steady was our good *Elijah* to accomplish, and to preserve it. So convinced was he of the Necessity of Scriptural Accord, and of the Hurt of Causeless Separations; that when the Enemy Two Years ago found Means to diffuse an angry Ferment over the Nation

(a Fire yet burning) he freely concurr'd to a Motion, that *we Dissenters of this County should revive and practice the said Heads of Agreement*: And as became his Age and Experience, in the very last Year of his Life, he exhorted other Brethren, That all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, would more perfectly Unite in him, and strengthen the common Interest of Christ.

How eminently his God *was with him* in his younger Years of Ministry, some of you are yet Witnesses, tho' many are fallen asleep. Happy it was, to be so confirmed in the beginning of his Race, and constrain'd by the Love of Christ to thirst for the Conversion of precious Souls. But while he stood in the Temple, preaching all the Words of this Life, some thought fit to forbid him and Thousands more, by introducing such Things in God's Worship, as made him a Confessor and Witness in Sackcloth against unscriptural Impositions. He kept himself pure, by obeying his Light. He cou'd not warp nor dissemble his Principles or Convictions: Yet would not judge the Liberty of others; which I count is truly the Virtue of Moderation; and in him it was accompany'd with so much Humility and Self-denial, that it's strange, any could hate him, or cast him out for God's Name's sake. Some Years ago, apprehending that he should more promote the Kingdom of God, he had Thoughts to bestow a good Share of his Labours on the poor Country-People, being accepted of all about him; for he never confin'd his Cares wholly to this Church, nor disdain'd to confer with us, his Juniors, how to set forward the Common Salvation.

Very

Very solicitous he ever was to raise in our Churches a holy, learned, painful Ministry, that might be indeed *the Glory of Christ*, and who having tasted the Grace of God in their own Regeneration, might be hopeful to raise him a holy Seed : For generally it will fare with Religion in this World, according to the Spirit and Temper of the Ministry. In the *publick Schools of the Prophets*, there was no Admittance for our Youth, but upon such Terms as our Neighbours well know, and the Reasons and Design thereof. Hence this Work also was (but not by our Choice) driven into Corners, nor unmolested there : Our *Elijah* sometime labour'd himself to cultivate and form the Minds of some Sons of the Prophets, not in vain. And since that, he otherwise assisted divers worthy Students that needed ; which is a labour of Love to Christ's Name, that certainly follows him. When his Ministry to you was interrupted by Sons of Violence, he was content to labour in another Field, as Providence gave Opportunity. But when a Door was open'd for his Return to the *Flock of Slaughter*, and you recalled him to *his own*, no tempting Advantages could detain him. From that Day he finish'd his Course in feeding this beloved little Flock; suffering yet some impotent Rudenesses at times ; but prudent Patience diverted greater Storms ; His decent Habitation God guarded, and spread his Table with envy'd Plenty in the Sight of Foolish Enemies : Granting him, on a small Revenue, to live in good Figure, and by means of laudable Frugality, to be still ready to Offices of Charity to poorer Brethren and to Strangers : So did his *Faith work by Love*. And as became
a Chri-

a Christian Bishop, he was given to Hospitality, and other good Works, drawing out his very Soul to the Hungry, and well improving what Interest he had in others, to procure Relief, especially for poor Churches and their Ministers. In visiting such Congregations he delighted; and as the Lips of the Righteous feed many, so was the manner of his Converse with the Country People, who would hang upon his Lips, and their Hearts burn within them, while he, like our Blessed Jesus, did talk with them by the Way, and open the Scriptures. To any that enquired of him the Way of God, he was ever ready to shew that good old Way. It would ill become me to sit Judge on his Learning and Abilities, by comparing them with other Mens; but this you will all allow me to say, with clear Assurance, he was a good Man, and an able Minister, firm and faithful in great Temptations; a Man of an Excellent Spirit; far from sordid Self-seeking, and base Fear of Men; his Temper sweet and calm; his Conversation lowly, honourable, and unspotted in all Changes of Times, and therefore his Memory is blessed; but Posterity he left none, save whom he in Christ Jesus had begotten by the Gospel.

Luke 24.
32.

After a Gracious, Faithful God had brought him through all this Labour and Travel, still adorning the Doctrine he taught, he lived to see a more mournful State of Religion, both in Dissenters and others, in quiet Times: Very threatening Disorders, Backslidings from Faith and good Conscience are now universally confessed: Preachers, Writers, Convocations and Parliaments, Representation and loudly complain of grievous Corruptions.

tions. The vital Power and Practice of Godliness were very much lost, as the best Observers and Judges on all Sides have complained for an Age past; but the immediate Causes thereof are not so agreed. Many fell away from the grand Doctrines of Christianity. Family-Religion grew into neglect, and Holy Zeal in Matters of Worship, sunk into a fatal Indifference: Some Dissenters forgot what their Fathers had attained in Church-Discipline, and the rising Generation seem'd weary of the Strictness of the Pious Puritans.

This awaken'd his Zeal to attempt some Recovery in his own Province: To which end, for Three Summers, he procur'd a Lecture to be preach'd in Gloucester, by divers Ministers, assigning each Man his Subjects for the Year, which were always the great Things of the Law and the Gospel, such as our Lord Christ himself, and his Apostles most insisted on for Conversion and Edification, and thus we ought to be Fellow-Helpers to the Truth.

As his Lot was in the Latter Days, he took some Observation of Times from Scripture-Prophesy, but with great Sobriety and Modesty, aiming most to discern the proper Duty of the Day as the enquiring Prophets did, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. No Man dare say, that the Books of Daniel and Revelation cannot be profitably study'd, though the Men of Computation have so frequently erred therein. And sometimes like a Watchman, he would awfully tell us, what of the Night; when the Lion hath roared, and the Lord God hath spoken, who can but Prophesie?

During

During his last Sickness, he meditated on Three or Four Texts for publick Use, and according to the Wisdom given to him, prepar'd to help their Faith and Joy, and his Lord found him so doing. He seem'd indeed not to reckon his End quite so near, but was no way surpriz'd when it came; for he had oft pleasantly said, *My Affairs are settled for this World, and that to come; I am ready: Happy Soul! blessed is that Servant.* Living and Dying Christ Jesus was his Righteousness and Strength, his Hope, his Joy, and all his Salvation.

Matth. 24.
26.

This was our *Man of God*. Thus God was with him; and being took from us, well may we, with the deserted Prophet, cry out, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* for surely in this Loss, we all suffer a fore Rebuke.

And now, 1. Will any blame us, that like *Elisha* we bemoan our selves on this Account? Our Friend sleeps in Jesus, and his Body we can committ to rest in the Grave, where the wicked cease from troubling, in assured Hope that the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in him, will also raise up him by Jesus; and thus *John's* Disciples took up and bury'd his Beheaded Body, and went and told *Jesus* what had befallen them, consulting him what they must now do, in want of such a Master; but surely they resented their desolate Condition; and we that are so bereaved, have like need to go and tell Jesus, our kind, compassionate Jesus, our present Grief and Wound. Can any be so stupid as not to feel the Smart of this Stroak, or not consider that the Righteous, Faithful and Good Man is taken away? Or dare any despise such Chastening of the Lord? This loss indeed is but of *one Man*; but he is *one of the*

the last of his Order, and so its the more likely, that he is removed from the Evil to come. *Ano-* *Ira.* 57. 2
ther at the next City (Reverend Mr. *John Weaver* of Hereford) being taken to rest scarce a Month before, allow me at least, like Orphan-*Elisha*, to cry out, *My Father, my Father,* my Guide, my Friend, my Loving and Faithful Counsellor: *My Father* indeed, for this Day I must remember that affectionate and Solemn Charge he gave me Twenty Three Years ago, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, from *Job.* 21. 15. to feed his Sheep and his Lambs. Ah my Father! my tender, trusty, and prudent, patient Father; I am pained for thee at my very Heart. This Man of God stood for us all on the Watch-Tower, admonishing us to provide, like *Noah* against a Flood, and like the same *Noah*, he also *Heb.* 11. stood in the Breach, interceding for our *Ezek.* 14. Land; do I need move you to resent such a *14.* Loss? Our Day, ye see, grows cold and dark. Is it not sad then to lose so warm a Light? An exemplary Teacher and Reprover? Most Men seek their own Things more than Christ's; and is it not then grievous to lose one more, of few that are of a Publick, Catholick Spirit? Woe is me for that mad Spirit of Discord and Division raging thro' all the Land, even when the *Romans* are at our Gates? Is it not sore to be then bereaved of a Son of Peace, one of a loving, healing, forbearing Spirit; a true Minister of Reconciliation? Ah how fast the Age declines into all Worldliness and Sensuality! How sad is it then to part with any more of a Heavenly Temper and Design? Clouds seem big with Divine Vengeance upon impenitent, unreforming Nations; and

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what

what can be then a more fearful Omen, than for God to call from us those of a Mourning, Praying Spirit? Ah *my Father, my Father! the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof!*

Methinks in this one Man we suffer a Thousand Losses: All his good Offices to our trembling Nation and sickly Churches, cease for ever: From this Pulpit you shall hear him no more: No more will he warn or bless you in the Name of the Lord. Can there be any one among you that feels no Smart in this Separation? Weep not for him, but weep for your selves; and oh! that a painful Sense of this Affliction may dispose you all to receive Instruction this Day.

2. Can ye tell yet, now that *Elijah* is gone, *Where is the Lord his God?* Or that he remains no less with you? It's rare to see or hear now of his gracious Goings, even in the Sanctuary, of which our Fathers have told us: Doubtless God is yet in our Nation; but where doth his Grace appear? Where are his wonted Operations to rescue, heal, and save Souls? Where is his Arm revealed with the Word? Of many high Places and Famous Societies, even Splendid Churches now in the World we may say, *God is not there*: nor will he dwell in Temples that become *Dens of Thieves*, or *Synagogues of Satan*, Mic. 3. 1, to 8.—2. 7. The Unclean Spirit dwells in the Antichristian Crew of incurable Revolvers, where no Footsteps of his remain, in representing Evils, or cherishing true Goodness. They left God and Christ, and his Truths and Ways, and then he left them; and at this Day, tho' he visits such Nations with sore Plagues, they return not yet to him. It's true indeed, that Jesus, the powerful, careful Head of the Church,

Church, not only sits at the Father's Right Hand, in full Execution of all his Friendly Offices for his Members below; but he is still among them in Spirit, and so is in his Holy Temple, Psal. 11. 4. Rev. 2. 1. He is able to revive his good Work, and his slain Witnesses. He will never quite forsake his Pilgrim-Church on Earth, nor suffer his Faithfulness to fail: The Glorious Second Adam will ever raise a Spiritual Seed to bear his Name to all future Generations, Psal. 22. 30, 31. Isa. 53. 10. and he will dwell among them, 2 Cor. 6. 16. But so rarely do we now find him so doing, that we may justly say, *Where is the Lord?* His signal Providences towards us in Twenty Four Years past, do utterly forbid us to ask, as Israel did in Exod. 17. 7. *Is the Lord among us or not?* Or to say as they in Isa. 63. 11, 12. *Where is he that brought them up out of the Sea, with the Shepherd of his Flock?* But as to the Out-goings of his victorious Grace, we may say, *Whither is he retir'd?* His Beloved sought him, and found him not: Is he now found Walking, Building, Planting, and Blessing in his Churches, as he was wont? Act. 3. 26. Is he in the Ministry of the Word, causing it to work effectually? 1 Thess. 2. 13. Is he seen in our Sacred Assemblies, filling his House with Glory, breathing Life, Strength and Consolation into his Worshippers? Is he warming our Hearts, and hallowing our Families as heretofore? Ah, where is the clear Proof hereof? It would be a blessed Token to us, if a like glorious Spirit did fill and cloath us Ministers, and other Christians, as rested abundantly on our Predecessors: Or if his Word were of Power to compel many Sinners to hasten into the City of Refuge, and to fill

his House: and if his Sons and Daughters walked more orderly there before him: If dull and cold Hearts were excited to more Zeal for God, and delight in his Courts. If Sinners in *Sion* were tender-hearted, and more weaned from the World, and if all Sorts would walk worthy of God, and so adorn their Profession. If Churches were more Faithful to Christ, and would take sweet Counsel together to act vigorously for him, and to edify one another in Love, *Hag.* 1. 13, 14. We should not be at rest till it is thus, *Isa.* 62, 6, 7. and if once again we obtain of God to be so with us, it could be no great matter who is against us; the Worm Jacob might thresh the Mountains. He that so restoreth Souls, would own us in our Works, and appear for us at our need, *Isa.* 51. 9, 10. and truly no less can carry us safe through this Evil World, therefore should we be urgent for God's Good Presence, as Moses, in *Exod.* 33. 12 to 17. But can we say by such Tokens now, that the Lord God of *Elijah* is with us? Or if we have not our wonted Signs, must we not say, *Where is the Lord?*

What can we think, if these or the like Symptoms are found on us?

1. Many unclean, unchristian Spirits broke loose, and overturning all true Religion in the Land, open Adversaries to Truth, Holiness and Love, opposing and abhorring all Reformation.

2. Professors miserably divided by Opinions, Passions and Interests, like Ephraim and Manasseh against Judah, *Isa.* 9. 21. By which Alienations holy Zeal is destroy'd, many are offended and turn aside.

3. Our

3. Our Fountains are poison'd, and Foundations sapp'd: Youth generally forsake the God of their Fathers; Christian Families are profaned as others, by Neglects, and indulging Youthful Lusts and Disorders.

4. Late hopeful Appearances to recover a Primitive Spirit of Sincerity, Self-Denial and Brotherly Love among the Reformed, are sensibly lost, and the Vows of a Time of Adversity are forgotten.

5. Manifold new Alarms of Providence do little affect any of us, or move us to prepare to meet the Lord, Isa. 26, 10, 11. Jer. 3. 7.

6. Disfmal Clouds gather over all the Reformed Churches; and the Protestant Reformation it self visibly loses Ground every where, and the most inveterate Enemy thereof rejoiceth against it, with fresh Hopes of its Total Subversion and Extirpation.

7. There seems to be little or no understanding of the Times: God's People knew not the Judgment of their God; they see not his Name, Isa. 1. 2.

hear not the Voice of his Rod, as Men of Wisdom would do: They seem not to perceive his present Warnings or Counsels, nor flee to him, and yet are full of Fears and Complaints; their Hearts are ready to faint and fail thro' terrible Expectations. We all confess that the Holy one might justly disown and testify against us, when our Spot is not the Spot of his Children. We have not duly honour'd him for his great Salvations. Sinners

are not put to Shame: Many act in high

Contempt of God: Others spare not to boast how ready they are to act over again all their Outrages against their Brethren; and where then is the Lord? Or what Proofs have we, that he has not rejected us? Oh that we would enquire!

Neh. 9.
34, 35.

Jer. 5. 28,

3. But 30.

3. But in vain shall we now so enquire, if we do no more. Therefore, as ever we desire to find God with us, to heal our Disorders, and avert our Fears, we must return to our Beginnings, *Rev.* 2. 5. Let us then all return to the Lord, and to his Word, to seek and keep his Testimonies, and he will return to us, *Jer.* 3. 12.---4. 1, 2, 3, 4.---7. 2, 3. For that is the Rule of his Covenant: This greatly concerns us; for do we not all plainly see, how much we need both the Presence of his good Spirit of Grace for every good Work in our hand, *Joh.* 15. 5. and his Providential appearing in our Favour? *Psal.* 23. 1, 2. Oh then, that in hope of both, we would return to our God without any Guile, Reserve or Delay.

1. This Exhortation I direct to you of this bereaved Church, under the present Rebuke, *Consider your Ways*, and correct your Miscarriages. Long, very long ye had a precious Treasure in this Earthen Vessel that is now broken: But should ye not be humble, that under such Ministry, ye grew no more divine, spiritual and fruitful to God? Be not as the Fool that has no Heart yet to get Wisdom. This Stroke is full of Speech to the hearing Ear; and this one Thing it says to you, Ye are to hear and see your late Pastor no more; therefore remember what ye have heard and seen in him, and bewail your poor Improvement thereby, *Act.* 20. 31. Never forget the Truths he taught you; the essential, saving Truths of the Gospel; nor forget his Zeal for Truth, Holiness and Peace: He taught you by Word and Deed: He left you a Pattern of Piety, Charity, and universal Fidelity to God and Man; of walking orderly
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in God's House and your own. I hear Complaints of Disorders, very common in Christian Families. God is forgotten or robbed : The holy Seed is profaned by Ignorance and indulged Lusts : But remember your Pastor's Family, for your Conviction, and not Condemnation : Tread his Footsteps, and then, tho' *Elijah* is dead, ye shall know that the great Shepherd lives, caring for you ; who having the Residue of Spirit, may yet raise you Pastors after his own Heart, *Jer. 3. 14, 15.* Tho', perhaps, not so full of Treasure as this broken Vessel was : But instead of further Exhortation to you, I refer to his own *Letter*, wherein he, *loving his own to the End*, has told you all his Heart : Yea, good Lord, grant, it may sink into yours, and so reach its End.

I will only add, As ye have obtained Mercy, ye are Debtors to Sinners who have not : Wherefore, even for your sakes take the best Care ye can, that this great Breach be well filled with convenient speed ; and in going about that Work, *watch unto Prayer* ; for right Pastors are a singular Blessing from Christ : Commit this Affair often to him, and proceed wisely ; for what is once well done, is twice done. It will be a Mercy extending to your Neighbours, if you obtain of the Lord a Successor in the same Spirit and Purpose as the Deceased : He has mark'd out your Way in that *gracious Advice* he prepared for you : A better Legacy he could not give you, and I know, he was persuaded, that you would take good heed to his last Words ; *so do and prosper* : Go not a Step without God before you : Cherish mutual Love and Peace, and the God of Peace crown your Work : Give no Occasion to watchful Enemies to reproach
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your Conduct, as rash, foolish, or factious. Do all in a sedate, humble, serious Spirit, and as you may answer it to the great *Bishop of Souls*, that it was the best you could do to maintain his Honour and Interest in the World, and to repair this Tabernacle for him to dwell in.

2. Forasmuch as this doleful Occasion has drawn together a few younger Ministers, with other Sons of the Prophets, I humbly intreat, that we may all Practically remember the Spirit and Example of our *Elijah*, and oh may we obtain like Grace for Imitation; that it may appear the Lord is with us, as he was with our Fathers. If the same Mind be in us as shined in this Man of God; if our very Hearts believe that commanding Truth which he chose for his Motto, *Suprema Optima*; if we take hold on that Instruction which he constantly added to it in all his Books, *Fugit Hora. Ora. Labora*, and do accordingly; so far following him as he followed Christ, in our private Conversation, and in the House of God, reverencing the Wisdom of our Lord, adhering to his Rule, and acting for him in his own Spirit; then may we also *make our Prayer to him, and he shall hear and own us, and we shall pay him our Vows*; Job 22. 26, 27. Let it not be grievous to any of us, that once again I call to mind a few Things that we have seen or assuredly heard of this our *Elijah*. His solemn Seriousness at entering the Ministry and Pastoral Office, not without extraordinary Thoughtfulness, and much fervent Prayer for Divine Direction and Determination. His rare Diligence in private Study, even to old Age, redeeming his Mornings, the very Flower of Time for that use. His thirsting
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for the Conversion of Sinners, that God's House might be filled, and oft exhorting us to direct our Endeavours much to that Point. His Industry in Teaching all Sorts, and in all Forms; and especially the Young, whom he never disdain'd to Catechize in Publick. His Stedfastness in Pure, Evangelical Doctrine, experiencing how God and Christ had blessed it to himself and his Hearers. His concern that the rising Generation of Ministers should also adorn that Doctrine by excellent holy Conversation. His candid, publick Spirit, and his Enlargement of Heart to serve all the Churches, as he had Opportunity. His loving and peaceable Spirit, and lovely Condescension for Peace-sake, where it might be had with Truth and good Conscience. His Readiness to restore Love and Concord by all good Offices towards Reconciliation. His Fidelity to a good Cause in sharp Trials, worthy to be had in everlasting Remembrance. His amiable Humility and Readiness to communicate to the meanest of us his Thoughts and Counsels: His Regret for Professors declining to Worldliness, Pride, and every modish Vanity. His true mourning for the late Eruption of all manner of Wickedness and Licentiousness, which in former Years since the Revolution had been in part restrain'd and put out of Countenance. His Care for a Succession of Learned and Holy Ministers, and for the Continuance of the Reformation with us, his Hearts trembling as *Eli's* for the Ark of God, and deliberating thereupon what Protestants ought to do. His exemplary Zeal for good Works, and his generous Hospitality to the Brethren and to Strangers. His affectionate Care for his particular Flock, that after

him it might be well fed, and well kept. His prudent disposing of his copious Library. His Bounty to the Poor, with a particular Regard to the industrious Poor, or poor Tradesmen, for whose Encouragement he had ever used to keep by him a small Stock of Money to lend Five or Ten Pounds, or more, freely, to serve them at Times of need; which sort of *Lending* with Discretion, is a true Charity, and commended oft in Scripture, as *Deut.* 15. 7, 8, 10. *Psal.* 37. 26. — *1* 2. 5. *Luke* 6. 34, 35. These and the like Beauties we saw in this *Good Man*, this plain-hearted *Israelite-like Nabanael*; and they leave a sweet Perfume on his Name and Profession. I have recollected them for your use, that we may all adore that Grace that made him so Faithful and Imitable; may be humbled for our own many Defects, and may be excited to press forward, *Hebr.* 12. 1, 2. *Moses my Servant is dead; now therefore Joshua, Arise,* *Josh.* 1. 1, 2. So let us set forward, and hold on; and oh! may we hold out too, and finish so well as our *Elijah*, who in thus doing, did so easily and placidly resign himself and all to God's Sovereign Disposal.

3. Finally I turn to you in one short Word, who have long carelessly and unprofitably heard the Word of God from this old Prophet in this Place. Do you not yet hear a louder Voice of Warning in his perpetual Silence? Or when will ye hear? Was not this a *Man of God* indeed, and the Word in his Mouth, was it not the Truth of God? As *1 King.* 17. 24. Why then did ye not believe him, and chuse the Path of Life? I think ye also seem'd to honour him, and would be glad when the Lord calls you, to die the Death of the Righteous.

Righteous. It may be, some of you were sway'd by his Example and Influence to do many good Things, as the young King was by the Venerable old Priest, 2 Chron. 24. 2. But God grant that upon the ceasing of that Influence, none of you cease to do well, as he did, v. 17, 18. and yet this is to be fear'd of all who stop short of true Conversion: How long will ye receive the Grace of God in vain! Or how think ye to escape in neglecting great Salvation? Heb. 2. 3. How long indeed! This old Prophet has done what he could: He now warns and intreats you no more. He prays and mourns no more for you, nor ever shall; but ye shall know another Day, that there hath been a Prophet among you, Ezek. 2. 5. and his Judgment is with the Lord his God, whether ye be gathered to Christ or not. But will ye never be *compell'd* by our Perswasions, to flee from the Wrath to come, and get into the Sinners Sanctuary? Oh how will ye hereafter see the Face of the King that sent to invite you, and even the Face of this his Ambassador? Be asham'd, be heartily humbled for your Impenitence and Disobedience hitherto, and God keep you from judicial hardening, that yet ye may savingly hear Christ's Voice in any good Ministry remaining with you. *To Day. To Day, if ye will hear his Voice, for the Judge is at the Door,* ready to appear in Temporal and Eternal Judgment. If Contempt and Abuse of the Gospel should at last draw upon us some proportioned Miseries, as 'tis now very likely, would ye not then cry, Where is the God of Salvations? Where is this praying *Elijah* that stood so long in the Gap? Are ye not afraid lest he be a Witness of your Untowardness, and *make Intercession against you,* as Rom.

Rom. 11. 2. O deliver your own Souls, humbly seeking to God in Christ, who stands yet knocking at the Door. Cease not your Cry, till ye find access into his Grace: Ye have need to lament after the Lord this Day, and give him no Rest till he come and convert and heal you: If with true Contrition ye did look to him, he would yet be gracious and bind up your Wounds, and dwell among you, *Isa. 57. 15, 18.* and by this ye would best know where is the Lord God of *Elijah*. Call to mind the faithful Admonitions and Calls ye have had from the Lord by that Man, whose Face ye see no more, and let them at last sink into your Hearts, and appear now in new Obedience, as Seed that had long seemed to be bury'd under the Clods, promising a joyful harvest. Thus may ye all know the Things of your Peace, before they be hid from your Eyes. *Amen.*

The E N D.



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